the ALTERNATIVE:
AN AMERICAN SPECTATOR

Richard Strauss, A Classic of Our Time

by Henry Regnery

Suzanne R. Weaver
on Alexander Bickel

William H. Nolte
on An Uncanny Prophet

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May 1976 • Volume 9, Number 8

The Continuing Crisis

■ March 1976, and it is a gorgeous time for being alive, a fact neither gainsaid nor maculated in any way by the idiotic suicide of Dr. William Grodsky, the Los Angeles manic depressive, who during the evening news solemnly rose from a hot bath, hugged his portable television to his bosom, and departed this vale of tears in a 110-volt spectacular somewhat reminiscent of Mardi Gras. Dr. Grodsky's note revealed him as a humorless fellow, and such sour pusses would not appreciate the grandeur that this spring promises, with its furious political campaigning, its Bicentennial high jinks, and the continued capers of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, perhaps the most imaginative and inveterate liar to grace America since Mr. Joseph (Yellow Kid) Weil, whose death on February 26 leaves Mr. Kissinger without peer in the art of flimming the flam.

■ Memory of Yellow Kid Weil has dimmed with time, for the distinguished con artist did not turn up his toes until he had reached the advanced age of 100, but during his salad days he brought in nearly eight million dollars, without having ever spent more than brief sabbaticals in the calaboose. He received his sobriquet from the respected Chicago political theorist Bathhouse John Coughlin and gained international esteem not only through his prowess in the arts but also through his sartorial breakthroughs—canary-yellow gloves, yellow cravats, silk shirts, yellow suits, yellow shoes, and yellowish-red hair atop golden whiskers. He was years ahead of his time, and if, in days of yore, society sniffed at him for his bogus stocks, his "talking dogs," and that wonderful and worthless cave he salted with a gold-dust-filled shotgun, certainly contemporary America, taken as it is with rogues like Daniel Ellsberg and Ralph Nader, would celebrate him fondly. His ethical system was modernity itself: "Any con man knows you can't cheat an honest man," he remarked. "I never took anyone who didn't already have larceny in his heart." His favorite targets were lawyers, but then in his day public relations blatherskites and social workers were not so numerous. In later years he attempted to bring his vast experience to bear in the public interest, and upon observing President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society," he warned, "He's doing the same thing I did—taking from the rich and giving to the poor. The only difference is that he became President and I got sent up." At the age of 74 the Yellow Kid successfully maintained his innocence against charges that he had swindled The Little Sisters of the Poor out of a three-dollar contribution, a feat that compares handsomely with any testimony Mr. Kissinger has ever given before the Senate. I shall miss the Yellow Kid, but I take heart in knowing that Mr. Kissinger will carry on at least until the next election.

■ The primaries preceding that election have been enormously entertaining, as a mob of the rankest mediocrities light out in hot pursuit of poor Jerry. Perhaps the most amusing moment came early in March when Senator Birch Bayh, who for years has been awing the Senate with cartwheels and handstands confident that they would assure his eventual Presidential election, was flattened by a crowd of virtual John Does, including a retired one-term governor of a remote Southern province, Mr. Jimmy Carter. The catastrophe befell Senator Bayh at the March 2 Massachusetts primary where he could gull only five percent of the electorate. Two days later he retired.

■ By the end of the month Mr. Carter (*cärt´ĕr*) loomed as a man to conjure with, having won the Florida and Illinois primaries with a blitzkrieg of vaporings and toothy grins reminiscent of old Franklin Delano under a full head of martinis. Poor fish began exiting. Pennsylvania's Governor Milton J. Shapp retired after the Florida primary, where he finished slightly behind "no preference." And, after enthusiastically contending that his campaign had been a "remarkable success," Mr. Sargent Shriver quit, sagely admonishing that "narcoticism is a disservice to Democracy." Mr. Ronald Reagan finally beat Mr. Ford, and the unorthodox Senator Frank Church entered the race for the Democratic nomination by comparing himself to a turtle.

■ Apparently an odd alliance of atheists and highway safety fanatics has dealt a serious setback to Texas evangelist Hans Mulliken's effort to crawl along the median of Interstate 20 in a protest pilgrimage that was eventually to end in Washington, D.C. with the nation on "her knees before God." Louisiana state troopers turned Mulliken back at the border after he had crept 18½ miles from Marshall, Texas. "There's a federal statute that covers stuff like that on interstates," said state trooper W.H. Tynes. Texas had exempted the Rev. Mulliken but not godless Louisiana. By the end of the month the Rev. Mulliken was tormented by doubts as to whether he should accept a ride to Mississippi, where theology takes precedence over politics, or simply return to Marshall. Evidence that the Postal Service is still having difficulty with its billion-dollar bulk mail processing system came on March 27 when it was reported that the Post Office had lost the cremated remains of Capt. Bertram E. Williams, USN Ret. The sepulchral package was being sent to Arlington National Cemetery for burial. And the toe-kissing bandit of New Orleans is finally in custody. He turns out to be Arthur L. Ford, 21, who police say burglarized homes of small amounts of money and then insisted on sucking his victims' toes. Mr. Ford is no relation to President Ford.

■ Significant decisions were handed down by our illustrious judicial system. Mr. and Mrs. André Homere were awarded $42,500 in damages because the mayhem inflicted upon Mrs. Homere by a berserk New York City subway rider left her kissing ability impaired, thus denying Mr. Homere "the consortium of his wife for three months." In Detroit, $12,000 was awarded to Miss Krystal Thomas, the 17-year-old former champion majorette, who claimed her career as a baton twirler was hopelessly destroyed when she was attacked by a rampaging goose at the Detroit Race Course. And in Miami, Mr. William Cashman, the beautiful fireman whose undraped body was the centerfold for a women's magazine, is suing. Apparently his handsome photograph is now appearing in a brochure for *Blueboy*, a homosexual art publication, and poor Mr. Cashman has been "embarrassed, ridiculed, held up to public scorn and shame and [he has] suffered a loss of income and a loss of earning capacity, because of the *Blueboy* brochures." Alas, the burden of corporeal splendor.

■ Mrs. Linda Taylor, known to Chicagoans as the "Welfare Queen," has had her Cadillac limousine seized by police. Those seal-hunt protesters, who set out early in the month to protect the sorely pressed *Halichoerus grypus* from seal hunters in Newfoundland, were rescued from a barren island on March 17 after being endangered by a blizzard. And in England Mr. Colin Heard, the porn tycoon, has reneged on his promise to sell culture-starved Englishmen calendars showing Mrs. Jacqueline Onassis buck naked, because the American-printed calendars include captions that the decorous Mr. Heard adjudges "tasteless."

■ The Bill of Rights was left a battered hulk in Salt Lake City when the City Commission clamped down on that metropolis' most promising cultural stirring, topless and bottomless shoe shine parlors, where customers had been paying up to $100 for the talents of scantily clad shoeshine ladies. And one week after the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* reported that the average Washington, D.C. drinker consumes more than triple the national average of 1.33 fifths per month, South Dakota's Senator James Abourezk declared that it was "grossly unfair" for the *Washington Post* to report that his son lives on an Indian reservation where he collects food stamps. Finally, salutations to the Midwest Breeders' Cooperative of Shawano, Wisconsin for the most moronic Bicentennial commemorative yet, its Bicentennial Semen Sale featuring pictures of George Washington on every semen container.

■ Alas, March also witnessed two examples of the terrible philistinism afflicting America. In San Francisco, the Secret Service harassed and detained the young dadaist, Mr. Boyd Blake Rice, 19, when he attempted to make the presentation of a skinned goat's head to Mrs. Betty Ford. It seemed to be the fifties all over again as Secret Service agent Chester Miller primly pronounced, "That's not the kind of thing you should present a lady." Still worse was the abomination committed in Los Angeles where an imaginative exhibition of "conceptual" art was put down and artist Mr. Kim Jones arrested shortly after locking himself in a cage, dousing three rats with kerosene, and setting them afire—a creation of incomparable majesty, utterly beyond the ken of millions of Americans who simply will not allow themselves to sit back and experience Art even when it is caged.

—*RBT*

Editor in Chief: R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.; **Publisher:** Baron Von Kannon of the Saturday Evening Club; **Business Manager:** Ronald E. Burr; **Managing Editor:** Adam Meyerson; **Assistant Managing Editor:** Joyce Goldberg; **Production Manager:** Martin E. Northway; **Executive Secretary:** Marian Staum; **Senior Editors:** Terry Krieger, William Kristol, Rev. George Nathan; **Art Advisor:** Elliott Banfield; **Associates:** David Brudnoy, Jameson Campaigne, Jr., D.W. Cooper, John R. Coyne, Jr., Joseph P. Duggan, Alan Reynolds; **Art:** Thomas Bewick; **Contributors:** Robert Asahina, Aram Bakshian, Jr., Frank W. Blatchford III, A. Lawrence Chickering, Christopher DeMuth, Terry Eastland, John C. Elsbury, Jerry Gerde, Fran Griffin, Elvin Grubbs, Anthony Harrigan, Neil Howe, Leslie Lenkowsky, W. Wesley McDonald, Robert McTiernan, William H. Nolte, Gary North, Karl O'Lessker, Terry O'Rourke, Marc F. Plattner, G.W. Plunkitt, Peter J. Rusthoven, Benjamin Stein, J. Whitney Stillman, Timothy J. Wheeler; **Legal Counsel:** Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish & Short.

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Contributors

Robert Asahina is managing editor of *The Public Interest*...**Josiah Lee Auspitz** is an Independent Research Fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities... **Aram Bakshian, Jr.**, a former White House speechwriter, is a lecturer for the Shore Line Company...**James Grant**, an associate of *The Alternative*, is on the editorial staff of *Barron's Weekly*... **David J. Mandel** is a New York attorney ...**Judy Mathews** is a writer living in Bloomington, Indiana...**Eugene H. Methvin** is a Washington-based senior editor for *Reader's Digest*...**Adam Meyerson** is managing editor of *The Alternative*...**William H. Nolte**, chairman of the English department at the University of South Carolina, and author of *H.L. Mencken, Literary Critic*, is finishing a book on Robinson Jeffers... **Karl O'Lessker** is professor of political science and of public and environmental affairs at Indiana University...**Ralph Raico**, an active member of the Libertarian Party, teaches history at SUNY College, Buffalo...**Henry Regnery** is chairman of the Henry Regnery publishing company and a trustee of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra...**Peter J. Rusthoven** is finishing his studies at the Harvard Law School...**Gerald R. Uba**, the film critic, lives in West Seneca, New York...**Suzanne R. Weaver** teaches political philosophy at Yale.

The Alternative: An American Spectator *is published monthly except July and September at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Second class postage paid at Bloomington, Indiana, and additional mailing offices.*

A one-year subscription (ten issues) costs $8, outside the United States $9. All correspondence (manuscripts, subscriptions, threatening letters, federal grants, etc.) should be sent to The Alternative, *P.O. Box 877, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.*

Microfilm editions of The Alternative *are available from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed, or (most redundantly of all) national origin—and yes, sex, even sex.

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Volume 9, Number 8, May 1976.

Guest Editorial/Eugene H. Methvin

Who Is the Trojan, and Who the Horse?

Among other notable revolutionary anniversaries, 1976 brings us to the twentieth anniversary of Nikita Khrushchev's famous "Crimes of Stalin" speech. The introspection and evolution set in motion with that speech have not yet run their course. But in Moscow, unlike other anniversary sites, there is no commemoration or celebration. The 25th Communist Party Congress came and went, and Comrade Brezhnev made it through a five-hour speech in good health, without anyone recalling Khrushchev's "destalinization" exploit five congresses ago.

In Paris, however, the anniversary was marked by a Bolshevik declaration of independence, of sorts—and a faint stab at "deleninization." For the French Communist Party at its own 22nd congress publicly dumped that quintessential Leninist dogma, the "dictatorship of the proletariat." The Gallic party, under its leader Georges Marchais, became the first of the major Bolshevik parties founded under the Communist International to take such a formal step.

All the French anti-Communists were quick to denounce the Communist maneuver as just another Leninist deception, on a par with Fidel Castro's unredeemed pledge of free elections. Minister of Justice Jean Lecanuet declared that the Communists were "changing their mask but not their skin. If they come to power, their mask will drop." Jean-François Revel, political philosopher and *L'Express* columnist, stirred a storm with a new book, *The Totalitarian Temptation*, arguing that the Socialists are committing suicide by working with the Communists because "the essence of communism is Stalinism." In *Est & Ouest*, Claude Harmel suggested Communist moves feigning criticism of the Soviet Union and independence of the Kremlin are actually done with Moscow's permission, perhaps even on its orders.

Well, I for one, a notorious, unrepentant cold warrior, say *hooray*. Hooray for the French Communists. And if the Kremlin did order the debunking of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" doctrine as a new wrinkle in its campaign of deception, then hooray for the Kremlin. After all, as any bunco squad sergeant in any urban police department in America will tell you, most con men con themselves first. Snake-oil salesmen often come to believe, really believe, in at least some of the powers of their marvelous product. It is quite clear that Lenin, when he wrote *State and Revolution*, really did believe that on the morrow of his glorious revolution Rousseau's noble savage would leap forth from the Russian proletariat and peasantry, transforming Russia into a socialist-anarchist wonderland in which the state would wither away.

So let the French Communists gull the gullible among the French voters with their praise for democracy, pluralism, parliamentary rule, and promises to permit peaceful throw-the-rascals-out politics. They just might come to believe such nonsense themselves one of these days.

Mind you, I am not suggesting that we put their faith to the test anytime soon, say, by turning control of the *Sûreté* and the armed forces over to them in next week's coalition cabinet.

But it would be worse than a folly in our continuing confrontation with the world's totalitarians to brush off the French CP's action as just another Bolshevik twist, a gambit to fake the unwary into buying the bogus package. It would be a blunder. For gambits may backfire and lead to checkmate. The French Reds are playing with their capital pieces, and may be gambling more than they know; but the Soviets know it, as their sour mien testifies. The French move cuts so deeply to the heart of Soviet ideology that even for the Politburo to have to discuss the matter opens windows in the Kremlin that have been shut for years. Like the King Tut mummies in Pharaoh's tombs, the fresh air may turn the whole kaboodle to crumbling dust, if not in minutes, then in decades, a mere tick of the historical clock.

Behind the French heresy lies a perfectly understandable Marxist-Leninist drive: the lust for power, and a reach for its levers. The French Communists, long among the most servile parrots of the Moscow line, find their orthodoxy an increasingly itchy handicap as their prospects for electoral success improve. They control about twenty percent of the French vote, and the Socialist Party about thirty percent. Socialist leader François Mitterand last May ran in the presidential election under a "Union of the Left" banner with Communist support and won 49.7 percent of the vote, barely losing to centrist Valery Giscard d'Estaing. Had Mitterand won, some of his Bolshevik comrades would occupy cabinet seats today.

With an electoral victory so close, the traditionally orthodox French Communists are clearly embarrassed by their totalitarian image. So last November, in Rome, they joined their traditionally unorthodox Italian comrades in a remarkable statement, declaring that the way to power was through the democratic systems of their countries. They pledged themselves to guarantee "freedom of thought and expression and freedom of the press," and they backed "the plurality of political parties" and "the right of existence and activity of opposition parties"—although, to be sure, they neglected to promise free elections and a peaceful surrender of power if the voters so ordain.

The French CP is particularly embarrassed when it receives formal appeals for help from the likes of Ukrainian mathematician Leonid I. Plyushch. This worthy, albeit a devout Marxist, was carted off three years ago to a Kiev booby hatch for such mild tergiversations as proposing basic civil liberties in the workers' paradise. But after a worldwide campaign by scientists, the French CP did indeed appeal in his behalf, and the Soviets released him in January. Plyushch held a press conference in Paris on the eve of the French party congress, describing the "Ward 7" horrors and tortures applied by KGB "psychiatrists" to more than sixty political prisoners, and appealing for the release of other dissidents who are being subjected to Soviet menticide.

The French CP newspaper, *L'Humanité*, published an accurate but brief summary of Plyushch's report, though buried on an inside page. And Comrade Marchais, in his address to his congress, attacked the Soviet Union for "repressive measures that infringe on freedom of opinion, expression, or creativity" of Soviet citizens: "We cannot accept in effect that the Communist ideal, whose object is the happiness of man and for which we ask the workers to fight, should be stained by unjust and unjustifiable acts. Such acts are in no way an obligatory consequence of socialism."

At the same time Marchais announced that a fuzzy notion called "communism under French colors" would replace dictatorship of the proletariat as his party's goal. The idea seems to be that few capitalists are left, and that if only the French electorate unites under Communist leadership to finish them off peacefully, there will be no need for a dictatorship. Thus comrades were urged to recruit beyond proletarian ranks. Other speakers explained that the word "dictatorship" offends 1976 sensibilities, having been dirtied up by fellows like Hitler and Mussolini. (Stalin, may he roast in peace, was not mentioned.) And when some old curmudgeons insisted on waving clenched-fist "solidarity" salutes during the singing of "The Internationale," Marchais chided them: "The raised fist is not in the French tradition. We are for the outstretched hand. We offer it to all who want to struggle with us for building a better society, to defend national independence."

These French CP actions have visibly disturbed the Soviets. Their official observer at the Paris congress, Politburo member Andrei P. Kirilenko, grumbled that "A new attempt is being made to slander the reality and ideals of socialism and confuse the progressive forces." And from his podium two weeks later at his

(*continued on page 29*)

The Alternative: An American Spectator • May 1976 • Volume 9, Number 8

Henry Regnery

Richard Strauss, A Classic of Our Time

When Richard Strauss appeared in London in 1947 at a special concert arranged in his honor by Sir Thomas Beecham, many people found it difficult to believe that the composer of *Salomé* and *Rosenkavalier* was still alive. In the grim world of 1947, when most of the great opera houses of Europe were bombed-out shells, when Dresden, that jewel of the old Europe where many of the Strauss operas had first been performed, was a wasteland of rubble and under Soviet Russian occupation, Richard Strauss must have appeared to be a revenant for a long-since vanished past. Ludwig II of Bavaria, whom the world considered mad, but whose first act as king was to send his chancellor to find Richard Wagner and bring him to Munich, was in the first year of his reign when Strauss was born in his capital on the Isar in 1864, and it was in the Royal Opera of Munich, a few months later, where *Tristan* had its first performance. Strauss's life, from his birth in the placid Munich of Ludwig II to his death in 1949 in a shattered, divided Europe, spanned a period of violent change. He came at the end, and may well represent the last gift to the world, of a great musical tradition.

Richard Strauss, in contrast to most of the great composers, enjoyed not only a long life, but a life, one can believe, that came about as close to complete success and fulfillment as is permitted to man, flawed and imperfect creature that he is. His mother came from the Pschorr family, who were well-to-do and respected Munich brewers. His father, Franz, came from a family which for generations had occupied the office of tower warden in a small town in northern Bavaria. One of the responsibilities of the tower warden was to play the horn for festive occasions, and Franz, who came to Munich as a young man, made himself the leading horn player of his time. Besides occupying the chair of first horn in the Munich opera, he was also professor in the conservatory. On Sunday afternoons the Strausses and their friends would gather in the garden of an uncle, and play music. Richard's first compositions were performed at such affairs, by an amateur orchestra, the "Wilde Gung'l," which was conducted by his father and in which he played violin.

Franz was a demanding father, and saw to it that his son was given an exacting and thorough musical education, beginning with piano lessons at the age of four. These were followed by instruction in violin, theory, and composition, all from friends or colleagues of Franz, but Richard's greatest musical education probably came from his father himself. Franz had an infallible sense of time as well as a violent temper, so that to make music with him, as Richard put it, could be a "somewhat unpredictable pleasure, but I learned how music should be played from the innumerable times I had to accompany him in the beautiful Mozart horn concertos and the Beethoven horn sonatas."

As a reward for his graduation from the classical Gymnasium, where he did well, Franz took Richard to Bayreuth, and the following winter, with proper introductions, sent him to Vienna, where he played the piano part for a public performance of his violin concerto, and received the only favorable comment from the redoubtable critic Eduard Hanslick he was ever to have. The next year his father let him go to Berlin, where, among others, he met Hans von Bülow, the great conductor of the day. Before their meeting, Bülow had arranged to have his orchestra play Strauss's serenade for winds, and on the occasion of their meeting asked him to compose a suite for winds. This was completed the following summer, and in the winter of 1884, when Strauss was 18, Bülow had his orchestra play the piece at a public performance in Munich with Strauss as conductor, his formal debut. A conservatory would have had nothing to offer to Strauss; instead, he spent two years at the University of Munich, where he studied philosophy and the history of art. He was now ready to begin his musical career.

In 1885, Bülow arranged for Strauss to come as his assistant to Meiningen, a small principality, which had one of the best orchestras and theatres in Germany, and where Bülow was music director. Among those in the audience as Strauss made his debut with the Meiningen orchestra—first as soloist in the Mozart C-minor piano concerto and then conducting his own F-minor symphony—was no less a figure than Johannes Brahms. Strauss, of course, was most anxious to have Brahms' opinion of his symphony, and reports the conversation as follows: "In his laconic way, he said only, 'Quite nice,' but then added an encouraging piece of advice, 'Young man, study the Schubert dances and try your hand in the invention of eight-bar melodies.' " "I am grateful," Strauss added, "chiefly to Johannes Brahms, that since then I have never been ashamed to use a popular melody (as little as they are regarded by the school-wisdom of contemporary criticism, they come to one rarely, and then only at a fortunate moment)."

Strauss spent only one winter in Meiningen, but the opportunity to work under such a man as Bülow with an excellent orchestra and before a discerning audience, gave him superb training and invaluable experience. Meiningen was followed by engagements first in Munich

as third conductor of the opera, then in Weimar for four years as second conductor, and then again in Munich, where he was given the title *königlicher Kapellmeister* (royal conductor) of the opera. It was in Weimar, after long and careful preparation, that he conducted *Tristan* for the first time—"The most beautiful experience of my life," he wrote to Cosima Wagner. It was also in Weimar that he conducted the first performance of Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel and Gretel*, which the composer, then entirely unknown, had sent to Strauss. Through Strauss's efforts, the opera became successful and Humperdinck famous almost overnight.

Strauss's first compositions, not surprisingly, were in the traditional forms: besides a gavotte, a "Festmarsch," an early symphony, the violin concerto already mentioned, there was a horn concerto, a quartet, a cello sonata, and so on. *Guntram*, his first opera, was given a friendly reception in Weimar, where it premiered, but in Munich it was a dismal failure. The Munich tenor, after the first performance, declared he would sing it again only if guaranteed a higher pension, and the orchestra threatened to strike.

Strauss's first great success would be with his tone-poems. The first of these, *Macbeth*, was performed in Berlin, under Bülow's direction; Bülow wrote to a friend that it sounded "overpowering," and was enough to make him into an optimist. The second, *Don Juan*, is the earliest work of Strauss to have become part of the regular symphonic repertoire. After the first rehearsal for the first performance, which took place in Weimar in November 1889, Strauss wrote to his father: "I am happy to see that I have again made progress in instrumentation; everything sounded fine, and comes out superbly, even if it is horribly difficult. I felt sorry for the poor horn and trumpet players. They blew themselves blue, it is so difficult—it is fortunate that the piece is so short.... The sound was wonderful, of enormous intensity and voluptuousness.... The oboe passage in g-major with the basses divided into four parts was especially beautiful; the divided violas and cellos, all with mutes, the horns also all muted, had a perfectly magical sound..."

In his choice of the tone-poem instead of the traditional symphony, Strauss was seeking his own means of expression, but, as the following from a letter to Bülow written at the time of the composition of *Macbeth* makes clear, he was well aware of the paramount importance of form: "If one wishes to create a work of art that is coherent in tone and structure, and if it is to have such an effect on the listener, then what the composer wishes to say must have taken form in his mind. This is only possible in consequence of the inspiration of a poetical idea, whether this accompanies the work as program or not." Within a year *Don Juan* was followed by an equally impressive tone-poem, *Death and Transfiguration*.

In 1898 Strauss became First Conductor of the Royal Opera in Berlin. During the first ten years of his association with the Berlin Opera, he appeared as conductor 700 times, and directed 69 different works, the first, characteristically, being *Tristan*, which was followed, in less than two weeks, by *Carmen*, *Hänsel and Gretel*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *La Muette de Portici*, and *Fidelio*. He was now at the height of his immense vitality and creative powers—three further tone-poems, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and *Don Quixote* were behind him, as well as a number of songs and smaller works; a second opera, *Feuersnot*, was in preparation; and he soon completed another tone-poem, the immense *Heldenleben*, which was first performed in 1899. Romain Rolland heard it soon after in Cologne, and was overwhelmed; years later he wrote: "...it was clear to me that the mediocrity of his melodic sense scarcely exceeded that of a Mendelssohn, but the harmonic-rhythmic invention, the brilliance of the instrumentation, the dramatic intelligence, the will, were gigantic. I think still today that the vital arrow of Strauss has never risen higher than it did then."

Besides his heavy schedule as conductor of the Berlin Opera, his creative work, and appearances as guest conductor in cities from London to Moscow, Strauss

found time to set up his own orchestra for the performance of works by contemporary composers. In 1904 he made an American tour, which became a great triumph, and included 21 concerts in four weeks with 20 different orchestras, recitals of his own songs with his wife Pauline as soloist, and the world premiere of a new work, the *Sinfonia Domestica* on March 21, 1904 in Carnegie Hall in New York. Strauss was now the acknowledged great figure of contemporary music, the successor, one might say, of Wagner and Brahms.

The two tone-poems written during the first years of Strauss's engagement as conductor in Berlin, *Heldenleben* and the *Sinfonia Domestica*, are his last works in this form. One has the impression that he had carried "program music" to the extreme limits of its possibilities. *Heldenleben* is written for a very large orchestra, which Strauss uses with the complete mastery now at his command. It opens with the presentation of the hero in a wonderfully clear, strong theme played by the horns and strings, in E flat, the key of Beethoven's *Eroica*, but in spite of many beautiful passages, the work, to my mind, lacks coherence—perhaps Strauss tried to do too much. Strauss has been accused of glorifying himself in *Heldenleben*. While the hero's "help-mate" is clearly a picture of Strauss's own wife Pauline—as he told Romain Rolland—and the depiction of the hero's enemies a portrayal of his own critics, it is hardly plausible that Strauss thought of himself as a hero, or intended the piece as a representation of himself in a heroic cast. In the opinion of the excellent English musician and critic Norman Del Mar, "Strauss had too much of a sense of humor pompously to proclaim himself a hero to all the world."

In the *Sinfonia Domestica*, Strauss, as he said, undertook "to give a musical picture of married life. I know that some people believe the work to be a humorous representation of domestic happiness... but it is my intention that the work be taken seriously." Romain Rolland, with whom Strauss maintained a friendly and doubtless mutually stimulating relationship for many years, objected to the "programmatic division" of the Domestic Symphony. In his letter of reply, Strauss explained his reasons for using a program. "You may be right," he wrote to Rolland, "in what you say about the program of the *Domestica*, and in this you agree with Gustav Mahler, who completely damns the whole business of a program.... For me, the poetical program is nothing more than the means by which the expression and purely musical development of my feelings are given form; it is not, as you believe, merely a musical description of certain events of life. That would be utterly contrary to the spirit of music. But for music not to lose itself in complete arbitrariness, to dissolve in emptiness, it needs the limits of form, and such a boundary is formed by a program." Many years later, Strauss remarked that he had "no particular liking" for *Heldenleben*, but he chose to conduct the Domestic Symphony, particularly lovingly, we are told, for the celebration of his eightieth birthday in 1944 in Vienna.

Strauss himself must have thought he had gone as far as he could with program music, but he had yet to write a successful opera. Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, which had been translated into German and very successfully presented in his Berlin theatre by Max Reinhardt, seemed to offer Strauss exactly the dramatic material he was looking for. After setting the opening lines, "*Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salomé heute Nacht!*," Strauss wrote to a friend that "the piece cried out for music." It was first performed December 9, 1905 in Dresden, and caused a great sensation. Some were horrified, especially by the idea of basing an opera on this gruesome story of degeneracy, but Gustav Mahler welcomed it as "a work of genius... one of the greatest masterpieces of our time." When, two years later, it was performed in New York at the Metropolitan, the house was sold out at double prices and extra policemen had to be called to handle the crowds. Whatever Mahler may have thought, the New York critics were utterly appalled, and after one performance it was withdrawn. It was an enormous success, however, in Eu-

rope, and with the proceeds—Strauss knew the value of his work—the composer built his country house in Garmisch, which became his home for the rest of his life, and where he died.

In the meantime, Strauss had met the Austrian poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who became his close friend and collaborator, and remained so until Hofmannsthal's death in 1929. The first result of this meeting was *Elektra*, which was first performed under Ernst von Schuch in Dresden on January 25, 1909. Ernst Krause, in his book on Strauss, sums it all up as follows: "In 'Elektra' Strauss plunged into the abyss on the dark side of existence with all the vehemence of his vital musical nature, although he later asserted that he had approached the subject 'very coolly and at a distance.' Disease here is not restricted to Klytemnestra's liver; everything in this snake pit is rotten, putrid, decaying, while the music, in its unprecedented demands on the orchestra, a truly gigantic apparatus even larger than that of 'Salomé,' glitters, shines, seduces, underlines every word and gesture." Strauss himself wrote that *Salomé* and *Elektra* "stand alone among all my works; in them I went to the extreme limits of harmony, psychical polyphony... and the receptive ability of modern ears." I particularly remember a performance of *Elektra* many years ago in Cologne, the dramatic effect of which was heightened, if possible, by the Elektra collapsing at the climax of her great, incredibly demanding aria at the beginning of the opera.

After *Elektra* Strauss made up his mind "to write a Mozart opera." Hofmannsthal made several suggestions, none of which seemed satisfactory, until, after a long, fruitful conversation in Weimar with his friend Count Harry Kessler, Hofmannsthal brought Strauss the bare outline of what was to become *Rosenkavalier*. Strauss was delighted, and urged his friend to go home at once and set to work. After receiving the first pages, Strauss wrote to Hofmannsthal: "The scene is charming, and will compose itself like oil and butter, I am already hatching it out." The correspondence that followed between poet and musician, both intent on producing a work of art and each submerging his personality in the task at hand, is of the greatest interest. One can almost see the finished opera taking form in their exchange of letters: "For the end of the third act, the concluding duet of Sophie and Octavian, I have a very pretty melody. Would it be possible for you to give me 12 to 16 verses in the following rhythm..." From this beginning we have that beautiful, magical duet, "*Ist ein Traum, kann nicht wirklich sein...*" that ends the opera, but nowhere, it seems to me, does Strauss's sense for the relationship between music and text show itself more clearly than in the setting of the words of the Marschallin, "*Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit*," which marks the transition in the first act from the amorous exchange between Octavian and the Marschallin, with which the opera opens, to the development. These few bars have the unmistakable touch of genius.

Rosenkavalier was an immediate success, and is still one of the most popular operas, not only in Germany and Austria, but wherever opera is given. The first performance in Dresden on January 26, 1911, was a great international event. Reinhardt had come down from Berlin, at Strauss's suggestion, to supervise the staging, and as before, Ernst von Schuch, whom Strauss greatly respected, was the conductor. Every principal paper in Europe and the United States sent correspondents. In a letter to his friend Ottonie Degenfeld (dated 5:00 a.m., January 27, 1911), Hofmannsthal left an impression of that memorable evening:

"I can write only very hurriedly, so many people everywhere, in the hotel, on the stairs, constantly knocking at the door, incredibly exciting, and *very* nice. It was a wonderful evening, how happy I would have been if you had been there. Everything so festive, especially so in this small city; the hundreds of vehicles, the crowds of curious people in the streets, then the beginning, the tension, then, after the second act, the sense of success. I went to the loge of Frau Strauss to offer my congratulations. At that moment, the

people saw me from below; the whole main floor turned around and began to applaud, people called out from all the boxes, it was a very pleasant moment, and more gratifying than the stupid, conventional appearance on the stage.... Afterward there was a dinner, for, I think, four hundred. I saw it all as through a mist...."

Rosenkavalier, perhaps, marked the high point of Strauss's collaboration with Hofmannsthal and of his own creative achievement, but much of great substance was to follow. There was the one-act ballet, *Josephslegende*, which was first performed in Paris in 1914 by the Diaghileff company; his last great orchestral work, the *Alpensymphonie*, which, for all its complexity and variety of instruments—including a wind and thunder machine and glockenspiel—is a work of great majesty and classic dignity; and then the three-act opera *Frau Ohne Schatten*, which had its first performance in Vienna in 1919. There were several smaller works, including *Intermezzo*, for which Strauss wrote the text himself, which was based on a rather ridiculous incident from his own life. Frau Strauss, while her husband was on a concert tour, opened a note addressed to him which was signed "Your ever loving Mitzi." She suspected the worst, and by the time Strauss returned, had consulted a lawyer about a divorce, etc. When the smoke had finally cleared, it turned out that Mitzi had confused Strauss with another musician, and was only trying to get two free tickets for the opera.

There were several other collaborators after Hofmannsthal's sudden death in 1929, the first, Stefan Zweig, whose literary gifts Strauss greatly admired. In his memoirs (published in Stockholm in 1944), Zweig has the following to say About Strauss:

"I was well aware of the honor of such an offer... I knew of no creative musician of our time I would have been more willing to serve than Richard Strauss, the last of the great race of full-blooded German musicians, which extends from Handel and Bach through Beethoven and Brahms into our own day. I declared myself ready, and at the first meeting proposed the theme of 'The Silent Woman' of Ben Jonson as a motive for an opera, and was pleasantly surprised at how quickly and clearly Strauss accepted all my suggestions. I had not expected... such astonishing dramatic understanding. While one was explaining the material to him he would be putting it into dramatic form, and, what was even more astonishing, adjusting it to the limits of his own capacity, which he grasped with almost unbelievable clarity. I have met many great artists in my life, but never one who knew how to maintain such abstract and unerring objectivity toward himself. At our very first meeting Strauss let me know quite frankly that a composer of 70 no longer possessed the original power of musical inspiration. Such symphonic works as *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Death and Transfiguration* would no longer be possible for him, since pure music required the highest degree of creative spirit, but the word still inspired him. He could take something that was formed and ready and illustrate it dramatically, because musical themes developed spontaneously from situations and words, which is why, in his last years, he had turned exclusively to opera....

"He gave me complete freedom.... He would be grateful, however, if I could construct a few complicated forms which would give him the possibility of particularly colorful development. 'I don't invent long melodies like Mozart. Mine are always short themes. But what I know how to do is to turn such a theme around, paraphrase it, get everything out of it that is in it, and in this no one can come close to me any more.' "

Die Schweigsame Frau had its first performance in Dresden in 1935 under Karl Boehm. Zweig was Jewish, and when Strauss discovered that Zweig's name was not to appear on the program, he let it be known that in this case he would not come to the first performance. Zweig's name did finally appear and Strauss attended the performance, but Hitler stayed away. Although Strauss urged Zweig to continue to work with him, Zweig felt that it would be better if he did

not; he eventually left Austria, and, finally, a homeless and tragic figure, took his own life in Brazil.

There were other operas. The last, *Capriccio*, for which Clemens Krauss wrote the text, was completed during the war, in 1941, when Strauss was 77, and first performed in Munich in 1942, not long before the stately old Munich opera house was destroyed. The subtitle of the work is "A Conversation Piece for Music," which is exactly what it is. It takes place in a country house outside Paris, about 1775, when, in Strauss's description, "Gluck was beginning his work on the reform of the opera." In *Capriccio* it is not the composer's intention to overwhelm us, at it was, perhaps, in *Heldenleben*, nor to plumb the depths of human emotion and desire, as in *Salomé*, but to express his love for the opera and his conception of the true purpose of art; in spite of having been written during World War II, it is a work that radiates the serenity of a great artist nearing the close of a full and creative life.

Although Strauss, particularly as a younger man, was regarded as a revolutionary and a destructive influence, there can be no doubt that Stefan Zweig was right when he said that with Strauss the great tradition that goes back to Handel and Bach was continued into our own day. In such music as *Heldenleben* and *Zarathustra* he doubtless expressed the spirit and inadequacies of his time, but because he never cut himself off from a great tradition, he was also able to rise above them. This is one reason why his music is not merely a period piece, but has something to say to us still, and, like all true art, can raise our eyes to a higher view of life. *Heldenleben*, as its critics say, may reflect the bombast of its age (which was not, by the way, confined to Wilhelm II), but in its lovely violin passages which describe the hero's "helpmate" and in the "Works of Peace" it does much more, and expresses another aspect of heroism. "Modern!" Strauss once said, "What does it mean to be modern? The word should be emphasized differently. Have inspiration like Beethoven, write counterpoint like Bach and be able to orchestrate like Mozart and be genuine and true children of your own time, then you will be modern."

Not long before his death, in a conversation with a friend in Zurich, Strauss is reported to have said that his affirmation of faith included "the Mozart melody as the purest expression of the human soul, and the Wagner opera, in which he saw the peak of the cultural development of the West." As for his own work, he said, "I know well that my symphonic work cannot approach the immense genius of Beethoven, and I am equally well aware of the distance of my operas (in the magnitude of conception, primary melodic invention, cultural wisdom) from the eternal works of Richard Wagner, but the facts of the development of the art of the theatre justify me in the modest but beautiful feeling that my operas, in the many-sidedness of their dramatic material and in the forms of their treatment will take an honorable place at the end of the rainbow in their relationship to all earlier works of the theatre—leaving the works of Richard Wagner out of account."

Two fairly recent, widely-heralded books, I should perhaps mention, take a rather different view of Richard Strauss and his achievement than is indicated in the foregoing. In his book *Richard Strauss*, George R. Marek speaks highly, and with understanding, of some of the music of Strauss, especially of his earlier period, but as the subtitle of his book indicates, "The Life of a Non-Hero," deprecates him as a man. The book contains all the conventional, stupid generalizations about pre-World War I Germany—Munich a city of beer and sausages, Berlin of bombast and militarism, the universal subservience to petty officials and the military, the music "foursquare and heavy as German furniture," the school system "grey and intolerant" where the usual teacher "was a dreary official whose small salary was compensated for by his own sense of importance," the family dominated by a tyrannical father, etc. One wonders how such a society was able to function at all, and could produce such music as that of Wagner, Brahms, and Richard Strauss. Marek

makes much of Frau Strauss's habit of insisting that guests wipe their shoes before coming into her house, and resents the fact that during both world wars Strauss continued to compose music, even under Hitler, instead of emigrating or getting himself thrown into a concentration camp. Marek unhesitatingly informs us that because Strauss did not indulge in extramarital affairs and was happily married, "He was not highly sexed," and that Strauss himself was the subject of his tone-poem *Heldenleben*. "Without Strauss," asks Mr. Marek, "who can this hero be?" But one may equally ask, Why Strauss? Why, because Marek needed to make the point to justify the theme of his book, Strauss as a "non-hero."

Strauss did indeed continue to write music during the two world wars, as Beethoven did during the Napoleonic wars. Was Mozart a hero, did Beethoven rush off to enlist to fight against the Hitler of his time? Shocking as it may sound, for Strauss to have stayed in Germany during the Hitler period may well have been the more honorable and courageous course than to emigrate. Had Strauss left Germany after the difficulties he experienced because his librettist was Jewish, and then presented himself in New York as a victim of Nazi persecution, he would have been received with open arms. There would have been special performances of his music, especially of *Heldenleben*, editorials in the *New York Times* and the *Saturday Review*, invitations and honorary degrees from Harvard and Yale, and so on. His first loyalty was to music; if he made compromises to the powers of the world, he remained true to his art. Do we criticize Shostakovich because he stayed in Russia, Solzhenitsyn because he would not leave until he was forced to? If Strauss had emigrated, it is doubtful that we would have *Capriccio*, the beautiful orchestral piece *Metamorphosen*, or the haunting, almost mystical last songs, composed a few months before his death. "Decay, mental and moral, attacked him," Mr. Marek tells us, "as it attacked his people. Strauss's mind was not strong enough to wing above the times." I must say that I fail to see much winging above the times by Mr. Marek's mind, with his clichés, his assumption, appropriate to the age of Camelot and *Playboy*, that if a man is loyal to his wife it can only be because he is not "highly sexed." Before leaving Mr. Marek, it is rather revealing that his own photograph on the jacket of his book is larger than that of Richard Strauss.

In Barbara Tuchman's *The Proud Tower*, Strauss is presented as the embodiment of all that was wrong, in Miss Tuchman's opinion, with the Germany of Wilhelm II. The portrait of himself in *Heldenleben*—and she takes it for granted that it is a portrait of himself—was a reflection of the "national mood," he was unable to keep his "technical facilities and command over ideas in bounds," and if, she said, German home-life is as Strauss pictured it in the *Sinfonia Domestica*, "German history becomes understandable." Strauss's wife *Pauline, who was a fine singer—the best* interpreter of his songs, he said—at the hands of Barbara Tuchman becomes a teutonic fury: she "practiced housewifery," we are told, "with ruthless fanaticism," shrieked at the maids if the linen closets were not arranged in "mathematically perfect rows," and treated visitors with "arrangements which exhibited a talent for organization.... not inferior to that of the late Field Marshal von Moltke." As for Strauss's music, *Elektra* is "two hours of demonic intensity," *Rosenkavalier* "a silver rose, beautiful, glittering and tarnished," the violin solo in *Heldenleben* "alternatively seductive and shrewish," and in the work as a whole there is "evidence of a deep-seated flaw in the composer." Miss Tuchman's omniscience and readiness to sit in judgment on nations, composers, composers' wives, music, or whatever it may be, are truly staggering. One has the impression that she learned how to write history from *Time* magazine.

Whatever flaws there may be in the music of Richard Strauss or were in him as a person—and who among us is without flaws?—he continued a great tradition into our own century and left us work

(*continued on page 27*)

James Grant

New York: Two Tales of a City

NEW YORK—What was Owen J. Quinn, an unemployed construction worker, trying to tell us when he parachuted 1,950 feet from the top of the World Trade Center last summer? The football jersey he wore provides a clue. It bore this inscription, from Matthew 19:26: "...With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." As Quinn was led away by police, examined by psychiatrists, booked on charges of criminal trespass, reckless endangerment, and disorderly conduct, he was heard to remark (and we paraphrase): I did it for the poor.

How like Quinn is the City of New York! The towering buildings, reckless leaps, questions of sanity, protestations (from the Mayor and City Council) that we did it for the poor. It is a tale known, at least in its headlines, to everyone. That the city long has lived beyond its means; that its tax base is eroding; that for eight months it teetered on the brink of bankruptcy awaiting state and federal aid; that, despite billions of dollars in loans, it may yet succumb—all this is commonplace.

Yet, as with Quinn, we want to know more. The details of the fall are hypnotizing. In the past decade, New York's short-term borrowing has risen by more than 700 percent. Overall indebtedness exceeds $13 billion; merely to service the debt—i.e., to repay principal and interest—will cost some $1.8 billion this fiscal year. City spending, in the past decade, has soared from $4.5 billion to over $12 billion annually. Employment and population both have fallen—the city has lost 500,000 jobs in the past seven years—and, despite a vacancy rate of just 2.8 percent, roughly 30,000 apartments are abandoned each year, the bitter fruit of rent control. The proportion of local government employment to population, reports the Conference Board, is the highest in the nation.

The talk in New York concerns survival. "I think it's going to be very tough for you gentlemen to cope with the stringencies that are going to be required without the aid of the state and federal governments," Felix G. Rohatyn, chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corp. ("Big Mac"), told city councilmen the other day. "There comes a point at which the viability of the city comes into question."

As a matter of fact, the question of New York's survival was raised under strikingly similar circumstances just 44 years ago. Indebtedness then had risen dramatically; bankers refused to lend the city more money; scandal and malfeasance presided at City Hall. "Defects in the government... of the City of New York have made and are making for a grave extravagance and wastefulness in nowise connected with the existing economic emergency. Drastic reform... must come and must come at once." So spoke New York Governor and President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt on December 9, 1932.

Yesterday and today are much alike. Then, as now, the end of government is power. Only the nature of patronage has changed. Social legislation, in large part, has replaced the larceny and paternalism of clubhouse days. New Yorkers look to government not for Christmas turkey but for low rents and free college tuition.

"Certainly it is not because of their special aptitude for their positions or mere accident," wrote Judge Samuel Seabury, appointed in 1931 to investigate conditions in New York City, "that practically every Democratic district leader in the City is ensconced in a key office of the City, many of them with nothing to do and a host of supernumeraries to help them do it." If Judge Seabury (a stern descendant of the nation's first Episcopal bishop) were at work today, he might ignore corruption for the greener turf of rent control. "Certainly," he could have written, "it is not because of mere accident that in a city of tenants, rents should be set by law below market rates." He could turn with equal profit to municipal unions, free tuition and open enrollments at the City University, a sprawling and under-utilized municipal hospital system, and the entire gamut of poverty programs. Tammany Hall, aid though it did in the Panic of 1837, the Blizzard of '88, and the Winter of '93, never dreamed of the uses to which compassion might be turned.

Municipal disaster, in the thirties, was a forthright business. If a Tammany regular stole, he lied; he didn't, as a rule, invoke the Declaration of Independence when confronted with the evidence. There is the instructive case of James J. McCormick, Democratic district leader of the 22nd Assembly District in Manhattan and Deputy City Clerk in charge of marriage licenses. McCormick earned ten thousand dollars or so annually on the job, yet deposited some $384,788 in his bank account between 1925 and 1931. To be married at City Hall, the Seabury Committee concluded (it did so without the willing testimony of McCormick), one had to be serious enough to pay twice.

Then there was the case of Thomas M. Farley, Democratic leader of the 14th Assembly District, whose clubhouse, the Thomas M. Farley Association, sheltered 'Billy Warren's Club," one of the city's most notorious gambling houses. Approximately $200,000 found its way into Farley's bank account between 1925 and 1930, although his reported annual income was about $8,000. Accused of this and more, Farley declared under oath, according to the Committee report, "that he had, during the period when he was business agent for a union, accumulated more than $100,000 in cash, which he kept in a tin box—'a wonderful box,' as he described it—and it was from these monies that he, from time to time, made deposits which appeared in his bank account."

Seabury's committee listened in disbelief as witnesses described dealings between politicians and gamblers—indeed, as its report was to charge, "not merely gamblers but murderers, gunmen and highway robbers." To Frank A. Cunningham, for nine years the chairman of the Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen, Seabury put this question: "Now let us be frank. Do you pretend to any knowledge of the city's finances? Do you?" Cunningham replied, with a forthrightness now rare, "No."

New York politicians, the evidence suggested, were incompetent, profligate, and crooked. There had been bribery of the zoning board and of the vice squad. Mayor James "Gentleman Jimmy" Walker, Seabury charged, had personally pocketed $1 million in tributes from city contractors. Political favoritism governed the distribution of unemployment benefits, bus franchises, and shipping licenses. In one instance, authorities had covered up a gambling-related murder on the premises of a Democratic political club.

Quite apart from corruption, it seemed to Seabury, city government was running out of control. Between 1922 and 1932, the budget had risen from $354.7 million to $676.4 million, or 91 percent, while population had grown by just 23 percent, from 5.6 million to 6.9 million. The ranks of city employees had soared 91 percent, from 38,872 to 74,220 souls. City debt was up from $1 billion in 1921 to $2.2 billion in 1932; yearly carrying charges exceeded $200 million. "It is sometimes asserted in uninformed quarters that the present financial condition of the City of New York is due to the general business depression," Seabury wrote. "This is not the fact; the trouble lies elsewhere."

Elsewhere meant the Walker administration, which had fallen back on ancient shortcuts. Sinking funds—reserves set aside to repurchase long-term bonds—were raided to buy short-term IOUs; city pension funds saw similar service. The assessed valuation of city real estate miraculously rose from $13 billion in 1926 to $19.6 billion in 1932 (it stands at $39.7 billion today), an increase, some charged, contrived by the Mayor to support a bigger base of debt. Mismanagement twice took New York into the teeth of default. In December 1931, only the passage of a state law permitting the sale of new city securities averted embarrassment. It was a brief reprieve. A year later, New York

again found itself short. "The bankers," wrote Seabury, "knowing that the public would not buy city obligations, were unwilling to advance any further funds." Again Albany intervened, this time with legislation authorizing cuts in municipal salaries; they were imposed, from 6 percent to 33 percent. (It would be the last time New York was so saved.) Still, the market exacted its price. New York, the City Controller complained in 1932, "has been compelled to pay the highest interest rates for borrowed money that legally can be imposed. At the same time, other municipalities have been accommodated at much lower rates...."

Crisis today has come full circle. Just as in 1932, when New York paid what seemed usurious rates for borrowed money, so, last September 9, were Municipal Assistance Corp. officials informed that they had to pay a record interest rate of 7.9 percent for $250 million in notes. Just as the city narrowly averted default 44 years ago, in part by dipping into pension funds, so, last October 18, was the city spared when the teachers' union agreed to furnish $150 million from its pension fund. Just as Mayor Walker's administration was riddled with chicanery, so, last January 14, did the accounting firm of Arthur Anderson & Co. report that the city balance sheet for last June 30—still uncorrected six months later—overstated assets by $1 billion.

Yet there are fundamental and perhaps fatal differences. For one thing, of course, the State of New York is nearly as insolvent nowadays as the city it seeks to rescue. For another, despite the diligent digging of special prosecutor Maurice H. Nadjari into the alleged sale of Bronx judgeships, crime in city government is much less an issue today than it was 44 years ago. The dimensions of economic trouble, however, have grown mightily: the city budget, this past decade, has risen nearly three-fold, not the 91 percent of Jimmy Walker's day. Municipal employment at year-end totaled 235,000 (even after attrition and layoffs had cut 32,000 in the previous six months) as opposed to 74,220 in 1932. Yet population, which peaked at 7.9 million in 1970 and has since fallen by at least 300,000, isn't significantly larger than the 6.9 million of the early Depression years.

The present crisis, unlike the last, comes amid demographic turmoil—a ten-year exodus of the middle class—as well as a deterioration of the housing stock and a flight of productive enterprise from the city. As crime and wages soar, and as the interstate highway system rewrites the economics of plant location, New York's business faces the choice of competitive stagnation or relocation. Taxes are the crowning blow. The F.&M. Schaefer Brewing Co., which has left Brooklyn for Allentown, Pennsylvania, recently explained why: a city sales tax of four percent on machinery and materials; a tax on signs the company maintained at Shea Stadium and Madison Square Garden; a tax on rented parking spaces in Manhattan; New York's three percent tax on fuel and seven percent tax on electricity, as well as special charges for city services, including $61,000 a year for depositing wastes at city dumps—not to mention electricity costs, which are double those in the Lehigh Valley. Small wonder, then, that, between 1969 and 1974, employment declined in 134 of the city's 162 major industries.

The most important difference, however, is resolve. Forty-four years ago New Yorkers and their government set about to mend their ways. On September 1, 1932, the eve of his certain removal from office, Mayor Walker stepped down and boarded a ship for Europe; he didn't come home for three years. Fiorello H. LaGuardia, who had campaigned unsuccessfully against Tammany corruption in 1928, returned to win in 1933, thanks in part to the support of Judge Seabury. Reform triumphed.

Today, however, when the problem is less corruption than statism, there is no Judge Seabury. Public support in one form or another is deemed a birthright by the heirs to reform. August, for instance,

found Rep. Bella S. Abzug haranguing a crowd "to resist if necessary" a 15-cent boost in subway fares. (Even with the increase, the Transit system this year will require $297.1 million in city subsidies and $246 million in aid from the state and federal governments.) Rent control, which has done incalculable harm since it was instituted as a "temporary" measure on November 1, 1943, will undoubtedly win renewal this year when it comes up for City Council vote.

In 1932, Judge Seabury deplored the quarter-billion dollars which each year went to support an army of irregular political employees. He called the legions "subsidized voters" and probably never dreamed that within two generations, thanks to the lengthening reach of reformed government, virtually every vote was to become subsidized. Nowhere is this change in "the shame of the cities" more evident than in the unionization of public employees. Last summer, perhaps the year's bleakest season, brought an illegal garbage strike, a steadfast refusal on the part of union leaders to bow to retrenchment, and "fear city" demonstrations by the New York Police Department. (On June 20, a bank robber made off with $8,709 while, two blocks away at 250 Broadway, the Policemen's Benevolent Association distributed pamphlets that warned of chaos if Mayor Beame went forward with planned force reductions.) "The city is staggering out of its budget crunch," the *Times* editorialized, "with only one thing clear: New York is working for its unionized civil servants, not vice versa."

The same might be said of city pensions, notwithstanding the timely aid last fall of Albert Shanker and the teachers' union. The statesmanlike act masked a key fact. Far from saving New York, employee pension funds have played prominently in its ruin. All of Gotham shuddered last summer to hear of the $13,000 bus driver who, at age 50 and through perfectly legal means, won a pension of $15,600 a year. In 1932, citywide retirement reserves totaled $202 million, of which $195 million, much to Seabury's alarm, had found its way into city paper; today, the funds exceed $8 billion and at that, so charges the State Pension Commission, they may fall $6 billion short of future needs. It is an ironic consolation that unions have already invested $1.2 billion in New York bonds and have agreed to buy another $2.5 billion over the next two years. That labor can no longer afford to watch the city slide into receivership is perhaps City Hall's most fervent hope.

Not that the danger is past. Felix G Rohatyn, chairman of Big Mac, warns that the city's financial condition worsens. There remains, for example, the question of what to do with the $1.1 billion in short-term notes that were not "swapped" last year for long-term Mac bonds. The city cannot afford to redeem them. The swap arrangement was part of an intricate financing package devised last fall which also included bank refinancings, new city taxes, the long-awaited federal loan of $2.3 billion, and a three-year "moratorium"—default with a promise—on municipal-note redemptions.

The forces of solvency face long odds They first must balance the budget, reform city accounting practices, and rescue the pension system from its keepers. Work has gone forward on some of these things. The city has agreed to present the world with a balanced budget by fiscal year 1978. Mayor Beame says he intends to saddle Albany with support of the City University's ten senior colleges, a $140 million saving that spells *finis* to free tuition without regard to race, creed, or a student's ability to read. Pushed by the creditors' committees that surround him, the Mayor has proposed new budget cuts which only months ago seemed to him barbaric.

A more basic job remains, however and here the prognosis is less cheery New York must again become productive It must abolish regulations and control and lower taxes. Sophisticated in many things, New Yorkers are haunted by an ancient superstition. It is that governments create wealth.

William H. Nolte

Robinson Jeffers, An Uncanny Prophet

"There are times, like our own present and the Gracchan age, in which there are two most deadly kinds of idealism, the reactionary and the democratic. The one believes in the reversibility of history, the other in a teleology of history. It makes no difference, to the inevitable failure with which both burden a nation over whose destiny they have power, whether it is to a memory or to a concept that they sacrifice it."

—Oswald Spengler

With rare exceptions, the most popular writers of any given period are quickly forgotten once their work is done—a fact that tempts one to conclude that there is an inherent wisdom in posterity. We must resist the temptation, of course, since nothing could be more nonsensical than the melioristic view that men are growing brighter (or women more virtuous) than their grandsires (or granddams). The literary lions of whom I speak—those who are perennially on the best-seller lists and who wear silk underwear, keep a retinue of sycophants, and turn stockbrokers green with envy—win their laurels by packaging for mass consumption whatever is most fashionable during that season. The mischief is that though some things never change, the merely fashionable changes from generation to generation, and often from decade to decade. Another reason for the almost instant oblivion that covers the straw-giants of yesteryear (and one that may be too obvious to need statement here) is that the audience that whoops and cheers for these pyrite magnificoes is an audience of semi-literates whose lips twitch and tremble as they read. Finally, the mass reader, like the benighted serf before Gutenberg, has no memory; that is, he lives as do the lower animals in an eternal present, never looking backward nor seeing ahead, just jogging in place in a time-stuck world, falling into the same ditch into which his father fell, and *his* father before him, the Old Adam incarnate. In defining him I intend no mockery. He is, after all, the true Upholder of the Faith (whatever that happens to be at any given time), and the muscle and sinew upon which all empires rest. Without him there would be no Caesars, and without the Caesars there would be no history books to sadden and enlighten sober men.

The great writer, by contrast, expresses both his own age as well as all ages. Which is to say that he expresses only those aspects of his age which might be found long before and which will be with us long after his dance is done. Which is to say, again, he can be fashionable only to a certain point. To concern himself with permanent things, he must know history, and he must have an eye for those traits in man which will endure. And he must, above all else, be deaf to the cries of the Many in order to hear the refrains that blow from out the past and into the future. If he is made of the true stuff, he will invariably get a hearing from his age though he can never be so famous as the tripe-mongers.

The modern poet who best exemplifies these views (and who, incidentally, stated most of them) is, I believe, Robinson Jeffers. During his lifetime (1887-1962) Jeffers was one of the two or three most famous poets writing in English. Considering his rejection of all mass beliefs and faiths, his extraordinary individualism, and his abhorrence of all intrusions on his privacy, one might marvel that he gained so large an audience in the 1920s and 1930s, when he was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine and only T.S. Eliot was his competitor as our most popular serious poet. In his rejection of all secular panaceas and his refusal to glorify the past or write hopefully of the future, Jeffers seems almost an anachronism in the modern world. Preeminently the advocate of disillusion, he remained steadfastly attached to the present while at the same time remaining detached from poetic fads and fashions. He has been every bit as solitary and secure in his own majority of one as were Poe, Melville, Whitman, Thoreau, and Dickinson in the nineteenth century. At a time when even the wise were admonishing the multitudes to gather into herds, Jeffers insisted that it was clearly time (I am referring to "The Soul's Desert," written on August 30, 1939) "To become disillusioned, each person to enter his own soul's desert/ And look for God—having seen man." In "Wise Men in Their Bad Hours," first published in 1924, he remarked the peculiar envy which many intellectuals have for the sleep-walking masses. The rhythmic flow of the opening lines, in particular, perfectly complement the central idea of the poem —to wit, that to have made "Something more equal to the centuries/ Than muscle and bone, is mostly to shed weakness." Read aloud, the opening lines give off a somber music:

> Wise men in their bad hours have envied
> The little people making merry like grasshoppers
> In spots of sunlight, hardly thinking
> Backward but never forward, and if they somehow
> Take hold upon the future they do it
> Half asleep, with the tools of generation
> Foolishly reduplicating
> Folly in thirty-year periods; they eat and laugh too,
> Groan against labors, wars and partings,
> Dance, talk, dress and undress; wise men have pretended
> The summer insects enviable;
> One must indulge the wise in moments of mockery.

After a sharp decline in popularity just before, during, and after World War II, Jeffers' stock has in recent years been on the rise again both at home and abroad. His out-of-print volumes are in great demand once more. One bookfinder (with the House of Books, Ltd.) wrote me in 1966: "Jeffers' books which a few years ago were found all over at fairly reasonable prices have suddenly disappeared and when available the prices have skyrocketed." New editions are appearing and then selling out almost at once. In the last ten years translations of his poetry have been very well received on the Continent, and especially in Iron Curtain countries where he is probably the favorite American poet. When Gilbert Highet wrote twenty years ago that the critical neglect of Jeffers constituted the greatest shame in American letters, he was expressing a view that I have heard numerous times in the last decade. Indeed, the constantly reiterated query about why Jeffers is not more read today makes me wonder if he's not the most widely read "unread" poet in world literature. The times, I am convinced, are now catching up with what was most "timeless" in his verse.

If at times Jeffers did little more than scold man for his stupidity and blood-thirstiness, he also sought to make some kind of moral sense out of the violence that lies as much in the spinning atoms as in the heart of man. His deep and abiding interest in values, which are born of violence, is revealed most clearly in his poems on the savior figures. In a previously unpublished poem which just appeared in *Harper's* (February 1976), entitled "What Odd Expedients," he commented on the "odd expedients" employed by God to create new values. For example: "The crackpot dreams of Jeanne d'Arc and Hitler, the murderous innocence of Attila, the bombast of Roosevelt, the tinsel star of Napoleon, the submissiveness/ Of peoples to leaders and men to death." In that poem, probably written early in the war, he wrote that "The next chapter of the world/ Concerns America and Russia, two bulls in one pasture."

* * *

Jeffers was fascinated with human saviors much as the pathologist is fascinated with bacterial toxins. Both saviors and toxins fill us with awe, with fear and trembling, and not infrequently (to borrow again from Kierkegaard) with sickness unto

death. Put bluntly, saviors are themselves sick and can only contaminate. With the hawkers of salvation so loud in the land today, Jeffers' analysis of the savior complex—or rather with one particular savior—has special immediacy.

Though the Reverend Arthur Barclay in *The Women at Point Sur* (1927) and Jesus in *Dear Judas* (1929) are his most memorable portraits of the savior, there are other characters, fictional and nonfictional, who would fall under that heading—Clare Walker in *The Loving Shepherdess* and, most especially, Hitler in "The Bowl of Blood." While all his saviors are driven, in varying degrees, by a lust for power, it is also apparent that each is finally victimized by his or her attachment to an absolutist concept of Truth. Man is most monstrous when he attempts to *become* the Truth, when he believes that he *is* a word, a concept, a symbol. Though his saviors differ vastly in personality—and hence in our estimation of their *moral* worth—each is monstrous in being so all-too-human. Without ever breaking away from humanity, each exaggerates his humanity until he (or she) becomes superhuman or, if you will, subhuman. All his saviors act against reason; all are blindly committed to one ideal; all seek escape from the naturalistic world of causal relations. Finally, all act out of a love for self which they misinterpret as love for mankind.

Included in *Be Angry at the Sun* (1941), "The Bowl of Blood" will be incomprehensible to those who are so blinded by moral indignation that they can see Hitler and Nazism as nothing more than monstrous aberrations or mutations, as things never before realized in human history. The little mask (or masque) is, first of all, a splendid work of art—and hence neither more nor less moral than a violent storm (or picture of that storm) or a sunset (or a picture of that sunset). And it attempts to place Hitler, who is called The Leader, in a historical—that is to say, causal—context that will enable the reader to understand him both as an object shaped by various factors and then as a subject, shaping, or more precisely destroying (at least temporarily), the nation he led for over a decade. Nearly all the poems of that volume are filled with the painful knowledge of man's helplessness before the gathering forces of a second world war. Refusing to subscribe to the comfortable lies on which moral indignation feeds, Jeffers viewed the sorry spectacle from a distance, from his tower. At the same time he realized, as one of the Maskers put it, that "The present is always a crisis; people want a partisan cry, not judgment."

The fact that people do demand a "partisan cry" rather than objective judgment goes a long way to explain why Jeffers has been misunderstood. His attitude towards Hitler is actually clear enough—and yet, as might be expected, a few critics believed they detected fascist sympathies in Jeffers, even down to the present. Writing in *Saturday Review* (May 22, 1971), a journalist (decency forbids my giving his name) called Jeffers a "proto-fascist" who once described Hitler as a "genius," implying that any such description must necessarily connote approval. As a matter of fact, Jeffers called Hitler a genius in "The Day Is a Poem (September 19, 1939)." The opening lines reveal quite clearly his attitude:

> This morning Hitler spoke in Danzig, we heard his voice.
> A man of genius: that is, of amazing
> Ability, courage, devotion, cored on a sick child's soul,
> Heard clearly through the dog wrath, a sick child
> Wailing in Danzig; invoking destruction and wailing at it.

In "Great Men," also from *Be Angry at the Sun*, Jeffers spoke of the greed inherent in those we consider great, and of the betrayal of great men by their future disciples. The poem, like the others in that volume, contains a starkly objective historical sense. The first half of the poem:

> Consider greatness.
> A great man must have a following, whether he gains it
> Like Roosevelt by grandiose good intentions, cajolery
> And public funds, or like Hitler by fanatic
> Patriotism, frank lies, genius and terror.
> Without great following no greatness; it is ever the greedy
> Flame on a wick dipped in the fat of millions;
> No man standing alone has ever been great;
> Except, most rarely, his will, passion or intellect
> Have come to posthumous power, and the naked spirit
> Picked up a crown.

In "The Bowl of Blood" Jeffers at once rejects the romantic theory that great men make history for the deterministic theory that forces make the man. A Masker states the view (which was Tolstoy's in *War and Peace*) when he personifies Power as the fathering force:

> It [power] chooses one man at random
> And clouds him and clots around him and it possesses him.
> Listen: the man does not have power,
> Power has the man.

The old woman, who gives counsel to those who ask it, is obviously the voice of history. As Colonel Weiss tells The Leader: "We know now that the dead live; we know they can help us with their counsel and their knowledge." For all his efforts to the contrary, Hitler can no more really believe in the soothsayer—that is, in history—than can any other such leader, but he is now desperate and hence willing to listen to "a solitude-crazed/ Fishwife for prophecies." When the woman bends over a basinful of some dark liquid, Hitler demands to know what it is:

> *Steinfurth*. Only blood, sir. It is not aesthetic but it is necessary. It is her method.
> *The Leader*. That I don't like. I won't have it.
> *Steinfurth*. No show without it, sir: she inhales the vapor and drifts into her trance. It is only swine's blood....

We learn that The Leader has put on a mask himself, one formerly worn by others. Indeed, all living things wear masks—that is, assume shapes—that can be put on or taken off. And when one dies, as the Second Masker remarks, "it is only someone dropping a mask./ A little personality lost, and the wild/ Beauty of the world resumed." At which point the First Masker throws off his cloak and hood and appears in an old blue and red uniform: "I am Frederick the Great, who laid in sweat and blood the foundation stones of the German Reich." After disdainfully introducing himself—"*Je suis le roi de Prusse. Et vous qui m'appelez en aide: qu'est-ce que vous êtes?*"—Frederick reminds The Leader that *he* had always been a friend to England and then demands, "What have you done to England... Austrian?" Hitler can only answer that England hates his nation, but insists that he is not the cause of that hatred:

> Ha? Not I but your own blood and successor,
> The old outcast at Doorn burnt the roast.
> *He* bungled them into hating us: mend it could no man.
> Where am I leading the Germans, King? From ruin to dominion.
> From degradation and poverty to honor, wealth, power,
> Vengeance and victory.

Frederick contemptuously dismisses such nonsensical ideals "Hm. Vengeance. Rache.... revanche.... This damned human race." I suspect, incidentally, that Jeffers admired the great German, who was Hitler's opposite in most ways. While calling mankind (half in humor) "*diese verdammte Rasse*," Frederick laughed at utopias of benevolence and peace—just as did Jeffers. Indeed, in a letter to Voltaire he expressed a thoroughly Jeffersian view: "Superstition, self-interest, vengeance, treason, ingratitude, will produce bloody and tragic scenes until the end of time, because we are governed by passions and very rarely by reason.... The human mind is weak; more than three fourths of mankind are made for subjection to the most absurd fanaticism. Fear of the Devil and of hell fascinates their eyes, and they detest the wise man who tries to enlighten them... Every man has a wild beast in him; few can restrain it; most men let loose the bridle when not restrained by terror of the law."

The Second Masker removes his cloak and hood, which the First puts on, and enters wearing the mask and attitude of Napoleon. He tells The Leader that he "would have unified all

Europe"—the recurring dream of all leaders, just as the idealist invariably dreams of Unity. And even as he insists *he* will not commit the madness of Napoleon, "who embroiled himself in Russia before he had settled with the English," The Leader is disturbed by the worm of doubt that he, too, will fail in his noble mission, fail even "After all that hope and faith, the labor, the long preparation, the... crimes.../ Blood, terror, treacheries in a just cause...."

Jeffers' Hitler has obviously succumbed to the romantic, idealistic, incestuous crime of all those who presume to encompass the hopes and aspirations of humanity in their single separate beings. In his moment of doubt he compares himself to the greatest of Western saviors:

> This is my Gethsemane night, Christ's agony in the garden:
> only to great artists
> Come these dark hours.

The Maskers, who stand outside such folly, partaking in it only to illustrate its nature (rather like the chorus in Greek tragedy), comment bitterly on the self-deceit of the tragic actors:

> *First Masker.*
> It is necessary from time to time
> To turn the eyes away from mankind,
> Frederick the Great's
> "verdammte Rasse,"
> Or be choked with pity
> and laughter.
> *Second.*
> The posturings, not the
> wickedness;
> The poverty, not the
> excess.
> Whoever thinks this
> man is more wicked
> Than other men knows
> not himself.
> *Third.*
> If man must always
> have man in his
> eyes and nostrils
> Mass-suicide perhaps
> might be best.

In other words, as the Second Masker remarked, the inordinate egotism of the savior makes him *less* than human rather than more. His concentration on humanity reveals a poverty of imagination and wisdom. Or perhaps I should say that The Leader's inversion (according to the Maskers) makes him simply all-too-human. Most of us, I suspect, would insist that Hitler was "more wicked" than we are; but that would be to say, according to the premises of the Maskers, that he was *more* patriotic, more determined to raise up his people, more convinced that ends justify means, and, above all, more gifted in the art of manipulating people than we are.

No matter where one might place Hitler in comparison with humanity at large, it is important to realize that his shibboleths possess a power not to be found in the abstractions of prose. In their discussion of the sources of power, the Maskers remark that Hitler and those with him did "have a sense of the other world, the inhuman one." Unfortunately, Hitler's sense of that world—the North Sea sunset, the Berchtesgaden landscape, the nature-dreams of Wagner and so forth—was too romantic to make it effective, that is, to make him abjure power over the lives of men. Still, the Germans employed the concrete language of poetry, while the West used the abstractions of prose. As one Masker put it: "They say 'blood and soil,' while the West says 'democracy.' Did you ever hear a prosier word? Democracy: the clay life-belt that sank Athens, and is sinking France. Blood and soil are poetry, you can fight for them; democracy is pure prose, abstract, indefinite, and, as they use it, dishonest."

After the meetings with Frederick and Napoleon, Hitler is more than ever doubtful that he will succeed in his plan for European unification (a euphemism for conquest). Only after conversing with the "mask" of a former friend named Friedenau, with whom he had served in the First World War, is he able to believe in final victory—and even then he must *will* the belief. In the meantime, the Maskers, wearing skull masks and black tights with white bones painted on them, begin a dance of death, chanting names of the cities that will be destroyed throughout Europe and Russia. Though told by Friedenau to pay no attention to the "spirits," Hitler cannot shake the doubts that cling to his rational self. Which is to say, he knows enough history to realize that he can only lose. He also knows that there is now no turning back; once the Rubicon has been crossed there is no room for the play of free choice in the tightly woven web of events. He can, however, allow those events to run their full course—and thereby bring down his nation's roof as memorial to his name. Which is, as a matter of fact, precisely what he did—a romantic conclusion to his romantic dreams.

Most important to the discussion of Jeffers' still controversial views about the war and our part in it is the question of whether Hitler posed a threat to Civilization—of whether a German victory in Europe would have meant the death of all those qualities we attribute to civilization. To begin with, those who expressed such a view had somehow convinced themselves that civilization and democracy were the same things, or were, in any case, complementary, even necessary one to the other. No historical evidence that I know of supports such a belief, whereas a great deal flatly contradicts it. It is pitifully ironic that in this century we have fought one war to make the world safe for democracy, another to save civilization, and two others for ideological reasons. Although he praised our democracy for the freedom it allowed individual citizens and insisted that he would fight fascism in *this* country, as well as Nazism or Communism, Jeffers always believed that the only excuse for making war was self-defense. He clearly enunciated such a view in an address he gave at the Library of Congress and elsewhere in February and March of 1941. I consider it important that he did not use the word *civilization* in the following passage, but rather the word *culture*: "Europe will be physically and morally exhausted after this second world war; and perhaps it will be our destiny to carry the heritage of European culture, and what we have added to it, across a time of twilight to a new age; as Byzantium carried the culture of Greece and Rome across the dark centuries, from that age to this one. Therefore we must guard what we have, for it is precious; and if we feel ourselves forced to intervene in foreign conflicts, we must consult the interests of our people first; and our generosity second,—we have always been generous; and ideology last. But sentimentality, never. We can still afford the material risks of sentimentality, but not the disillusion that follows it."

Though Jeffers clearly approved of *our* democracy, he never believed that we should force our way of life on other nations. Moreover, he considered it folly to "defend civilization," since to do so was tantamount to defending decay. Like Spengler and various other proponents of the cyclic theory of history, he considered civilization as a hardening of the arteries of culture. At one end of the cultural spectrum is barbarism and at the other is civilization. We should know, as he remarked in "The Answer,"

a poem published in 1937, that "great civilizations have broken down into violence, and their tyrants come, many times before." Indeed, he considered that process inevitable—and in no way worthy of lamentation. The opening lines of "Still the Mind Smiles" illustrate his historical view as well as any others:

> Still the mind smiles at its own rebellions,
> Knowing all the while that civilization and the other evils
> That make humanity ridiculous, remain
> Beautiful in the whole fabric, excesses that balance each other
> Like the paired wings of a flying bird.
> Misery and riches, civilization and squalid savagery,
> Mass war and the odor of unmanly peace:
> Tragic flourishes above and below the normal of life.

In *The Decline of the West* Spengler described that *process* in great detail, stating his conclusion most succinctly in the following sentence: "Culture and Civilization—the living body of a soul and the mummy of it."

Jeffers depicted Hitler as being less the enemy of civilization than a product of its discontents. To begin with, in his person were embodied, symbolically as well as in fact, those frustrations, fears, and hatreds natural to a proud people who have been defeated. He was to the embittered Germans what Huey Long was to impoverished Louisianans, and, in many ways, to be sure, what Roosevelt was to economically depressed Americans. Which is to say, he was a rallying point, a quieter of fears and dispenser of hope—in brief, a savior. To mirror the hopes of his people successfully, it was necessary that he possess a touch of genius and at the same time be insufficiently wise. He perfectly illustrated the Caesar that Jeffers described in "Meditation on Saviors" in 1928:

> Who is born when the world wanes, when the brave soul of
> the world falls on decay in the flesh increasing
> Comes one with a great level mind, sufficient vision,
> sufficient blindness, and clemency for love.
>
> This is the breath of rottenness I smelt; from the world
> waiting, stalled between storms, decaying a little,
> Bitterly afraid to be hurt, but knowing it cannot draw the
> savior Caesar but out of the blood-bath.

Far from defending civilization as the summit of human achievement, or of attempting to prolong the civilized state in a world of flux, Jeffers believed, quite emphatically, that civilization's "ripening/ Is freedom's crisis." Accent the word *ripening*. There is greatness during the growth of a culture; but once the summit has been reached—that is, when a civilization has been *formed* and it takes the fatal step towards imperialism—more and more restrictions of individual freedom become necessary to maintain an appearance of vigor and health. Once the height has been reached every road leads downward. In "Shine, Perishing Republic," written in the middle 1920s, Jeffers had described the movement from ripeness to decay, from Republic to Empire, in terms of natural process:

> I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make fruit,
> the fruit rots to make earth.
> Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances,
> ripeness and decadence; and home to the mother.

Though he believed that our decay was inevitable, that we had to become an Empire, he still maintained that the individual could avoid the mass corruption. In "The Bowl of Blood," written fifteen years later, when everyone in the West was intimately concerned with the approaching war, he considered ways of delaying the inevitable. One of the ways was to avoid the wars, especially moral wars, which are endemic to civilizations and hasten their declines.

If asked why civilizations cause such mischief and grief in the world before and during their inevitable decline, Jeffers probably would have answered that, for one thing, the restraints imposed by civilization must finally find release—in mass wars, for example; and, for another, the civilized state, in order to prolong its life-span, will always place a high premium on such abstractions as are necessary to give the social body an appearance (and it can only be an appearance) of both permanence and rectitude. Patriotism ranks highest on that list of abstractions. In patriotism, which is clearly a virtue up to a point, lie seeds enough for any nation to become imperialistic. No one would deny that the man who defends his land from foreign invaders is worthy of praise; but the man who invades another's land for patriotic reasons deserves our censure. Which is to say, patriotism is good or evil depending upon circumstance. In its abstract form, it is irrational. When it blurs the vision of the patriot and causes him to defend an *idea* of something rather than the thing itself, it debases what it ostensibly seeks to glorify. When one of the Maskers remarked that the "costly luxury" of freedom could be maintained only by staying "at home" and protecting what is *real*—that is, what we then possessed—he was stating the limits of patriotism:

> Men must keep in their minds
> The one way to be free: that's to be better armed
> And stronger than others, and not covet their goods,
> And stay frugally at home, death to invaders: the
> Greek states flowered
> While this was theirs.

If in "The Bowl of Blood" Jeffers expressed a deterministic view of the causes of the war, in *The Double Axe*, written during and just after the war when the survivors (at least in those nations which were on the winning side) were celebrating their victory and, as is natural, forgetting the dead, he insisted that we should never have become involved. In "The Love and the Hate" (the first part of the long narrative), Jeffers attempted to refute the arguments of those who bear responsibility for our entering the war. Hoult Gore, an 18-year-old boy who was killed in the Pacific, returns home to speak for all those who had been sentenced to death by their governments. Given the perspective from which his argument is sounded, it is difficult to refute Jeffers; that is, it is nigh unimaginable that the dead would disagree with his censures of the living. In a passage that I find particularly incisive, Hoult mockingly tells his American Legionnaire father that he will give him twenty-four hours to find just one reason for our going to war—and then, before his father can answer, he rejects those reasons that are invariably given:

> "Don't say Pearl Harbor though.
> That was a trick, a dirty one. They had duped us
> Deep into war, they'd fooled us into doing everything
> Except declare it and send armies abroad: but if we were
> blooded,
> We'd be mad enough. Germany wouldn't attack
> Although we sank her boats and supplied her enemies;
> They needled the touchy Japs and they did it for them.
> And don't, for God's sake,
> Pretend that we had to fight while we still had friends
> In Europe. what do we want of Europe? We're stronger
> than the whole rats' nest
> This side of Russia, those that fight and those that lie down,
> and you knew it,
> And it's now proved. Oh, Oh," he moaned, "God damn you,
> haven't you
> One single reason? And I died for that? Nor don't say freedom:
> War's freedom's killer. Don't say freedom for foreigners,
> Unless you intend to kill Russia on top of Germany and Britain
> on Japan, and burn the whole world
> Into one bloody bubble-bath; don't say democracy;
> Don't talk that mush. And don't pretend that the world
> Will be improved, or good will earned, or peace
> Made perfect by blasting cities and nations into bloody
> choppets: if you believe *that*
> You'll believe anything."

Jeffers would not deny that the war was inevitable; he had written a year before our entry into it that we would have to follow blindly our leaders who were intent on making war. Indeed as early as 1934, in "Rearmament," he wrote of the "disastrous rhythm" of events that would convey us to the fiery outrage. All he says here, in this most didactic of his poems, is that the reasons given were bad ones—no better than those which duped us

into World War I. Needless to say, we have seen the same reasons touted in support of the ten-year conflict in Asia. That, too, was a *moral* war. All that is needed to justify the most heinous of war crimes is a few abstractions. Jeffers wrote "The Love and the Hate" out of pity for the dead and utter disgust and contempt for warmongers the world over, and he was most contemptuous of the warmongers who happened to be ourselves. The poem suffers, as you might expect, from that intensity of pity and hatred, but it is an unforgettable narrative that only a great poet could have written. Not since Swift has anyone of the English-speaking world more effectively shown the horror of human folly.

But he does not stop there. What he takes apart in "The Love and the Hate," he puts back together in "The Inhumanist"; and human folly is but one of the parts. Unlike the scientist who takes things apart in order to discover them, the poet, Jeffers wrote, "puts things together, producing equally valid discovery, and actual creation." If individual parts are ugly, the whole remains beautiful. That is true of the world certainly. It is also true, I think, of the poetry of Jeffers. □

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by Aram Bakshian, Jr.

Confessions of a Beer Snob

"Beer," the venerable Nürnberger confided to me with a discreet belch, "has one distinct advantage over sex; when you finally have the time and the means to make the most of it, you can still do the stuff justice." The pronouncement, delivered over brimming steins of *Rauchbier*, a fascinating tawny brew made with smoked hops in Bamberg, and available only in an old Nürnberg tavern a few steps from Albrecht Dürer's imposing medieval house, carried a certain weight. So did the toper, who must have tipped the scales at close to three hundred pounds. Given his years and tonnage, there was certainly no question about it in his case—spirited quaffing *must* have been easier than spirited lovemaking.

None of our neighbors at the stout wooden table argued about it, for unlike most liquors and many wines, beer has a tendency to soothe rather than arouse unseemly wrangles and hankerings. In the right hands, it has always been a wholesome, easy sort of beverage, seldom, if ever, incendiary. Not that this has stopped it from being a target of saloon-wreckers, social meddlers, and other improvers of the race from earliest antiquity. The dread specter of prohibition may have first reared its ugly head in the second millennium before Christ when a wretched band of government do-gooders attempted to suppress the beershops of Pharaoh's Egypt. The superior minds of all historic periods, however, have sympathized with beer as the most benevolent of alcoholic beverages. Even Frederick the Great, a confirmed wine-biber, observed that drunkenness and desertion increased whenever the Prussian army left the beer-producing north of Germany and entered the wine-growing regions along the Rhine and Moselle. Nor is it any accident that parliamentary democracy has flourished only in countries favoring grain over grape.

As to spirits, Hogarth, in his eighteenth-century "Gin Alley" and "Beer Street" engravings, contrasted the squalor of London's gin-swilling slums with the healthy, happy life of England's beer- and ale-drinking artisans, tradesmen, and shopkeepers. In Hogarth's day, the brewing trade even managed, albeit inadvertently, to patronize the arts. Mrs. Thrale, whose glittering social circle and lavish dinner table provided Dr. Johnson with some of his most memorable conversations and best meals, was supported by the earnings of Mr. Thrale's brewery. Not long after that amiable gentleman went to his grave and the brewery failed, Johnson's friendship with the widow also expired. But at heart the good Doctor was a lover of taverns anyway. "There is no private house in which people can enjoy themselves so well as in a capital tavern," he once said, and he went even further, asserting that there "is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced, as by a good tavern or inn."

If this is less true today in the United States, I would submit that it is due to the scarcity of good taverns rather than any flaw in the Doctor's basic maxim. Independent Parisian and Viennese cafés, German beerhouses, and British pubs may be gradually losing the economic battle to chain concerns, but they still afford ample consolation to anyone with a healthy sense of leisure and an even healthier thirst. In America, however, television, singles bars, and a combination of brain rot and hunger for instant kicks among the lower middle class—not to mention dynamite-decibel Muzak—have nearly wiped out a good thing.

As for beer itself, although local breweries in the States have tended in recent decades either to fail or to be absorbed by national brands, an impressive variety of beers, porters, and ales, both imported and domestic, are still available in most decent-sized American communities. Some offer historical oddities like San Francisco's Anchor Brand *Steam Beer* (which tastes something like British bitter), and there are still a variety of interesting regional brands, though *Coors* and *Olympia* are much over-touted. It really is pathetically amusing the way trendies have inflated the price and reputation of *Coors*, a good but scarcely remarkable (in fact, to my mind, slightly watery) light beer. One thinks of the White House Mess during the Nixon years, where you couldn't get anything to drink except on Thursdays when an ersatz California-Mexican lunch was served and daring souls could order a few rounds of *Coors* or sip saccharine Margaritas, the latter a fate worse than sobriety and good for nothing but ridding the world of surplus diabetics.

What transports of delight the availability of *Coors* threw certain White House colleagues of mine into. I always suspected that they were more excited by the idea of its being specially flown in from Colorado than by what little taste it —or, for that matter, they—had. Most of the waiters and kitchen help were Filipinos who must have laughed in their sleeves at all the fuss, especially since their native land produces a far superior beer, *San Miguel*, which goes much better with well-seasoned food. Today the *Coors* cult still thrives, its devotees buying it even at the most ridiculous prices, and liquor store windows across the country proudly displaying banners blazoned with the inspiring motto, "*Coors* is here!" To their credit, the owners of the firm have never tried to gouge buyers, that being the work of less scrupulous re-

tailers, and *Coors*, although now widely distributed, still adheres rigidly to the quality controls of earlier days, when few people outside of Colorado had ever heard of it.

A less lasting fad also involving the White House was *Pearl* beer, a Texas brew beloved of Lyndon Johnson and immortalized in film footage purporting to show the late Great One tossing empty cans of it out his limousine window while careening around the LBJ ranch. With its most famous consumer's fall from political grace, *Pearl* beer returned to its humbler but rightful place as a sound if unspectacular regional brand fairly widely consumed in the Southwest. Alas, poor Lyndon, while dozens of aging society beauties and frayed demi-mondaines enthusiastically announce the intimacies they shared with JFK, few people are even willing to admit that they ever sampled your favorite brand of beer. Fate, as Major Hoople once pointed out, is a fickle mistress.

If one must choose from among today's leading American brews, almost all of which fall somewhere in the sickly, albino, and highly-carbonated range, the best would have to be the Anheuser-Busch brands. Between *Budweiser* and *Michelob*, the St. Louis brewery turns out the biggest single chunk of the premium market, and the quality of its products is at least consistent. When I do switch to *Schlitz*, it is mainly because I seem to remember reading somewhere that the firm, or some of its senior members, donated to the Goldwater campaign in a year when most corporate money was sacrificing principle to interest and backing the Great Society.

Folly on my part? Perhaps, but drinking, like dining, is not an entirely material matter. We cherish the recollection of certain viands and vintages because of the sentiments and the settings attached to them. So, too, with beer. There is, for example, a decent but in no way superlative Austrian beer by the name of *Gösser* which I am fond of to this day because of many happy hours spent sipping it at Vienna's *Cafe Schwarzenberg* during a bittersweet August that for nonbeer reasons I shall never forget. Nor shall I ever completely forsake a Norwegian lager called *Ringnes*, despite its slightly sugary aftertaste. My friends and I had too much fun disposing of vast amounts of it one afternoon in Oslo, where there is very little else to do.

Fortunately, there are also many genuinely superior beers one can encounter in memorable surroundings. Throughout Berlin, for example, you will find posters large and small asking and answering the rhetorical question, "*Was trinken wir? Schultheiss Bier*," which comes in several grades wrapped in silver or gold foil, all of them outstanding at the price. In 1974, at Bayreuth for the Ring Cycle, my most valuable and reliable friend was a beer called "Monk's Brew" which had been made in nearby Kulmbach since the Middle Ages. And, of course, one could spend a lifetime simply cataloguing the beer delights that abound throughout Germany—pale, dark, medium, and peculiar. In the latter category I would rank "Baker's Beer," "Frozen Beer," and "White Beer," which last, served in warm weather with an infusion of raspberry syrup, sounds disgusting but tastes delicious.

Such is the diversity and richness of German beers that one comes away temporarily spoiled. Not long ago, arriving in London after two weeks in Bavaria, I immediately sought out a Curry House in Soho, desperate for a spicy meal after a fortnight of ample but bland German fare. The Bengali curry, Tandoori chicken, and mango chutney were everything I had hoped for, but the lager

served with them was just the opposite. After so many delightful samples of robust local beer specialties in Germany, the standard London "lager" tasted like tapwater. It took several days to adjust to it. As for the dubious fluid the British call "beer," the orange-amber bitter produced by Watneys and so many other firms, it has a sharper tang but doesn't taste all that good. And John Bull, with characteristic obstinacy, still insists on serving it tepid, thereby bringing out the full nastiness of the flavor.

Far happier he who finds his way to Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Belgium, or even France (where good Alsatian beer like *Kronenberg* is as much a national product as Burgundy). The Danes, in *Tuborg* and *Carlsberg*, have two brands to be proud of, although Americans buying *Tuborg* at home are actually getting a product of the National Breweries, based in Baltimore, Maryland. On behalf of National, it should be said that their version, which is authorized, tastes like the Danish original and is certainly a good light beer by American standards. (Please note that I said light, not "Lite." The whole point of beer is that it *is* an indulgence; take away the alcohol or the calories and you remove much of the appeal and most of the taste. I have yet to sample a low-calorie beer that didn't taste like flat, watered-down draft with a few soapsuds added for visual appeal.)

The Dutch, who still carry on a thriving worldwide quality export trade with *Heineken*, also turn out many less expensive but nearly as tasty brands including *Breda* (which has been brewed since the sixteenth century and is thus about the same age as Velasquez's famous painting of its namesake city's surrender) and *Oranjeboum* (which I have always favored politically because of the monarchist connotation of its name, the orange tree and blossom symbolizing the reigning House of Orange).

Little Portugal has for many years given us a very pleasant lager called *Sagres* and it is to be hoped that the late Lusitanian political upheavals have not crossed the brewery wall. If I never see another gaping doubleknitwit crack open a bottle of *Mateus* or *Lancers* rosé, I shall be quite content—but should the Marxists take Portugal, *Sagres*, an ancient and honorable beer, would be a heartfelt loss. Marxist orthodoxy and good brewing simply do not mix. To this day, the poor Russians, although they produce gallons of inferior beer and *Kvas* within their own borders, are dependent for really good beer on their much more westernized satellite state, Czechoslovakia, where the very word *Pilsner* was born centuries before Karl Marx. (The name is derived from the Bohemian city of Pilsen.) True, *Pilsner* is expensive, but it is worth it, for it is still one of the world's greatest and noblest beers. I even know of one West German businessman who always keeps a keg of it in his office, despite his rampant anti-Communism and general Teutonic chauvinism. What higher tribute could one pay?

No one in his right mind, and with hard Western currency in his pockets, will ever settle for Russian beer in Moscow. All the best hotel bars and restaurants have *Pilsner* available, for a price, and much to the chagrin of less affluent locals whom I noticed looking on in envy as I spent a few hours of Nixon's last visit to the Soviet Union sipping it in an Intourist establishment... although, come to think of it, a fellow-traveler of mine was sipping *tea* and that may have been what aroused the disgust of the spectators. The Muscovites, who are inordinately fond of alcohol in any form and amount they can afford, were probably amazed that a visiting capitalist, who didn't have to, would voluntarily order tea.

But let us pass to greener, or, rather, yellower pastures. For one of the most outstanding modern achievements of a "westernized" Japan is the existence of a thriving, high-quality brewing industry. Tradition has it that the trade was founded under the tutelage of imported German brewmasters, which would help explain the success of smooth, delicious Japanese brands like *Kirin* and *Asahi*. Less commendable are some of the innovations of lesser Japanese brewers, including, rumor would have it, the use of formaldehyde as a flavor additive.

Closer to home, Canada deserves praise for several splendid ales, the name of *Molson* coming to mind in particular, and Mexico is not without its distinguished brands, notably *Carta Blanca* beer and an excellent ale, *Bohemia*. Which brings us back to the States, and the end of this bibulous ramble. I would only add that, next to the beer itself, and the company in which it is drunk, the most important thing is the container. Silver, pewter, porcelain, earthenware, and glass all have their special advocates. Silver is

fine, except that it tends to *taste* tarnished even before it looks so. A good, highly polished pewter tankard, preferably Cornish, has always seemed to me a more practical substitute. In former years, most thriving breweries and taverns produced their own tankards and steins, and special editions were issued to immortalize everything from hangings to horseraces. In my own collection is one mysterious item—a tall, dignified white porcelain piece, which proudly but enigmatically commemorates "Ivanhoe 36, Reading 42, August 17-18, 1910" in fine Old English characters along with an odd heraldic crest and "Reading Pa." in smaller print. All of which is very impressive, but I haven't the slightest clue as to what it means. Far less mysterious is the rhymed message on a small earthenware mug manufactured for "Celebrated Royal Pilsner Beer of Kansas City and Weston, Mo.":

Here's to the lying Lips we meet,
For truthful Lips are bores,
And lying Lips are very sweet,
When lying close to yours.

What luxury of sentiment and economy of expression—and how appropriate here in Washington, D.C. There are times, however, when one inclines to the melancholy rather than the romantic, and when that mood seizes me, I invariably resort to a lidded clay beerpot of German manufacture, fashioned in the form of a human skull and reminiscent of a more celebrated verse than the one chosen by the makers of "Celebrated Royal Pilsner Beer"—Lord Byron's *Lines Inscribed Upon a Cup Formed from a Skull*:

Start not—nor deem my spirit fled:
In me behold the only skull,
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull

* * *

Why not—since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce?
Redeem'd from worms and wasting clay
This chance is theirs, to be of use.

At any rate, it beats leaving your brain to science. Bottoms up, everyone. □

Special Film Review/Gerald R. Uba

Ken Russell's "Adamania"

The heavy publicity which had preceded the March 9th premiere of Ken Russell's *Adamania* was followed by even more extensive coverage of the rioting in and outside the theater. Unfortunately, the news reports concentrated on the numerous casualties and widespread property damage, obscuring the emergence of one of the greatest art works of the month.

After several successful biographies of famous composers, Russell has turned his camera toward the legendary economists. *Adamania*, based on the life of the founder of the Classical School, Adam Smith, premiered simultaneously in New York and Edinburgh on the two hundredth anniversary of the publication of Smith's *magnum opus*, *The Wealth of Nations*. Rather surprisingly, given Russell's well-known, eccentric directorial style, *Adamania* is scrupulously accurate historically, depicting Smith as an intensely repressed schizophrenic who invented the science of economics in order to relieve his cramped libidinal distress.

The subject forced Russell to strain to the limit his explosive genius. Economics is not known for the flamboyance of its practitioners, and Adam Smith's personality was a paradigm of dullness. However, much has been made—and Russell makes the most of it—of the fact that Smith never married and lived most of his life with his widowed mother. Russell also devotes considerable attention to Smith's recurring dream, in which a mysterious invisible hand kept appearing to him.

The movie begins with Bernard Mandeville, like Virgil guiding Dante, taking Smith on a tour through a pin factory, all the while pursued by a pack of running dogs who occasionally eat one another. Mandeville leads Smith to an Edinburgh brothel, where the history of economic thought is depicted in a series of symbolic rooms. In one, J.S. Mill and Harriet Taylor debate whether copulation is morally permissible or politically justified even in situations where only one partner experiences orgasm, or whether compensation is necessary for an equitable distribution of pleasure. In another, Idi Amin and Indira Gandhi do to each other what each has done to Uganda and India. And in the true Russell style so familiar to us, a puckishly mischievous Karl Marx darts in and out, spitting and hurling offal at Smith, and quoting him out of context.

Adamania

Produced and directed by Ken Russell. Sp: Ken Russell and Truman Capote. B/o *The Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith.

Warren Beatty.....*Adam Smith*
Ann-Margret.....*The Mother*
Donny Osmond.....*David Hume*
Jack Nicholson..*Bernard Mandeville*
Jack Palance.....*Edmund Burke*
Michael J. Pollard.....*Karl Marx*
Burt Reynolds.....*John Stuart Mill*
Barbi Benton.....*Harriet Taylor*
Robert Redford.....
.....*John Maynard Keynes*
Jane Fonda.....*Indira Gandhi*
Dick Gregory.....*Idi Amin*

The story ends, as it must, with Adam Smith being strangled to death by his beloved Invisible Hand, as J.M. Keynes looms, sneering, over our hero's convulsing body. His Lordship, played by Robert Redford, appears in an earlier scene as group leader of a Royal Cambridge Air Force bomber squadron which ravages Chicago and Vienna. Keynes' nemesis, the wily, cunning, inscrutable Milton Friedman, does not appear on-camera, but in one view of the Scotland countryside, an aircraft can be seen in the distance trailing vapor in the air to form the equation, "PQ = MV," and we all know who is the pilot. The anachronism may be disturbing, but the effect is profoundly moving as a thundercloud in the shape of the fiscal multiplier moves across the horizon to envelop the plane, which is never seen again.

Warren Beatty's subjective approach is superlative in his portrayal of the sex-crazed megalomaniac. The only actor whose performance is of near-equal quality is Donny Osmond in his supporting role as David Hume, singing his new hit song, "It's Not *Because* I Love You, It's Only a Correlation." Note should also be made of John Cage's music score, which features a lengthy, hauntingly evocative period of complete silence, except for the brothel scene when ragtime tunes are performed with broken chopsticks and jackboots on steel oil drums filled with ice. The delicate changes in tone as the ice melted were almost too precious for my ears.

Other than a personal expression of disgust, there is nothing I wish to add about the rioting. The epithets and fistfights had begun as groups supporting divergent schools of monetary policy (both apparently led by short bald men) had been waiting outside to enter, and the chaos carried over into the theater. When the Friedmanites pelted the screen with pennies, the Austrians scrambled futilely to recover them in the darkened building.

At any rate, it's hard to see how Russell could top this, though he is already at work on his next economics film, *Ricardo and Malthus and Marx and Lenin*, with Mike Nichols and Elaine May. And next month we will have another noteworthy contribution to the genre with Andy Warhol's *Galbraith*, starring John Vliet Lindsay. □

Ralph Raico

Thomas Szasz and the Age of Psychiatrism

Ours is the age of psychology and psychiatry, a Leaden Age. Above all in the United States, the fading away of the religious view of man, and even of the great, not directly religiously-based humanist tradition that for thousands of years maintained that man is something unique for man, has left a gaping void, increasingly filled by what purports to be "science." What the positivist philosopher Auguste Comte called the "theological" and the "metaphysical" stages are now behind us, and—true to his schema—they have been replaced by the "positive" stage. More and more, people seem to regard themselves and others not as *persons*, with all that that fateful category entails, but as instantiations of general laws of "human behavior"; and they look to the alleged "sciences" of psychology and psychiatry to furnish "explanations" of themselves, of those they come across, and—it is a pity to have to say it—even of their lovers and friends. From *Psychology Today*, with all its silly, slick pretensions (brilliantly satirized a couple of years ago in the *National Lampoon*), to the pocket magazine at the supermarket checkout counter urging us to "test" our this and that; from the National Advertising Council's "public service" TV ads impressing on us that every manner of bad habit is really a "disease," to the infiltration into the school system of behavior-modification drugs and courses in mental and sexual "healthiness"; from Ann Landers ("Run, kiddo, don't walk, to the nearest counselor"), down to that smiling hustler, Dr. David Reuben—our entire culture is by now drenched in the grotesque vocabulary and unnatural ways of thinking invented by a succession of MDs who mostly had a not very profound interest in what makes people tick. The harm is irreversible, and things are likely to get much worse. But at least we can try to understand and evaluate what is going on.

On the face of it, the situation is incomprehensible, given the meagerness of the actual "achievements" of psychology and psychiatry. What Noam Chomsky asserted in regard to Skinner's wild claims may be said of the two fields in general: "At the moment we have virtually no scientific evidence and not even the germs of an interesting hypothesis about how human behavior is determined...there exists no behavioral science incorporating empirically supported propositions that are not trivial and that apply to human affairs..." In an article in the *California Law Review* (1974), "Psychiatry and the Presumption of Expertise: Flipping Coins in the Courtroom," Bruce J. Ennis and Thomas R. Litwack carefully examine the by now extensive evidence as to the reliability of psychiatric judgments; these are some of their conclusions: "The chances of a second psychiatrist agreeing with the diagnosis of a first psychiatrist 'are barely better than 50-50'... psychiatric judgments are not only unreliable with respect to the ultimate diagnosis, but lack consistency even in the perception of the presence, nature and severity of symptoms... psychiatric predictions are incredibly inaccurate." It turns out that the factor which may best account for the diagnosis is "the clinician's own personality, value system, self-image, personal preferences, and attitudes." And, although about fifty thousand persons a year are subjected to "preventive detention," mostly on the judgment of psychiatrists, because they are "dangerous," "there is literally no evidence that psychiatrists reliably and accurately predict dangerous behavior. To the contrary, such predictions are wrong more often than they are right." In fact, psychiatrists can predict "dangerousness" much less accurately than can cops.

But the circumstance that their supposed "science" happens not to exist fazes establishment psychiatrists *le moins du monde*, and their imperialistic claims have come to rival those of Boniface VIII and the *Unam Sanctam*. One major move in the grand strategy has been to attempt to define all crime as "mental illness." Philip Q. Roche, an expert in the relationship of law and psychiatry, tells us: "All felons are mental cases... crime is a disturbance of communication, hence a form of mental illness." (This is a beautiful example of psychiatrists placing themselves at the disposal of whatever State happens to pay them; for, after all—*who defines what a felony is?*) Another gambit has been to make "mental illness" coextensive with all life-problems, emotional stresses, and, indeed, anything less than tip-top "functioning." For instance, in the view of Karl Menninger, perhaps the most famous psychiatrist in the country: "All people have mental illness of different degrees at different times, and sometimes some are much worse, or better." (Really, what could be going on in the mind of a man like this? What he is referring to is called, by mature people, *living life*.) And this incredible program from G. Brock Chisholm, former head of the World Federation of Mental Health: "The reinterpretation and eventual eradication of the concept of right and wrong... are belated objectives of practically all effective psychotherapy.... With the other human sciences, psychiatry must now decide what is to be the immediate future of the human race. No one else can. And this is the prime responsibility of psychiatry."

This whole bizarre and frightening social phenomenon Thomas Szasz terms "psychiatrism," and in his numerous books and articles (he is, happily, an inexhaustible worker), he has, in my view, provided us with a complete anatomy of its theory, sociology, and practice. Himself a psychiatrist (but, as we shall see, distinctions must be drawn), Szasz has devoted himself, ever since the publication, some fifteen years ago, of his *The Myth of Mental Illness*, to combating the systematic dehumanization of life and the grab for limitless power that psychiatrism represents. Szasz's work has earned him the admiration of thoughtful persons in all political camps (his articles have appeared, for example, in both *National Review* and the *New Republic*), but we have the satisfaction of knowing—as he explicitly states in his most recent book, *Ceremonial Chemistry*—that he regards himself as a libertarian.

The cornerstone of Szasz's comprehensive and devastating argument against psychiatrism is his distinction between two utterly opposed social phenomena, both of which go by the name of "psychiatry" and "psychotherapy." The first is a very minor part of what has historically passed for psychiatry: it is Contractual, or Voluntary, Psychiatry, the unique relationship invented by Freud and his followers, whereby a "patient" (the term "client" would be preferred by many nowadays) seeks out, of his own volition, a person thought to be skilled at discussing the kinds of problems the patient faces, enters into an agreement to purchase his services, and regularly *pays him*. The relationship is terminable at the will of the patient, and its structure is such that the patient is always ultimately in control. (Szasz has analyzed this brilliantly in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, a very important book, I believe, for anyone considering entering therapy.) Freud thought that the practitioner should be a doctor of medicine, but, as Szasz points out, this is clearly a residue of nineteenth-century positivism in his thought: there is no reason to think that what is supposed to occur—namely, talk about life-problems—can be better carried on with an MD than with an intelligent and experienced layman with certain character traits. The single most important characteristic of psychotherapy is that the client can rely upon the *absolute confidentiality* of the sessions, and it was Freud's stress on this social relationship, rather than his questionable methodology (dream-analysis, etc.), his often ludicrous theories, or the authoritarianism implicit in his personal view of the therapist as definer of the problems and knower of the psyche of the "patient," that constitutes his great achievement.

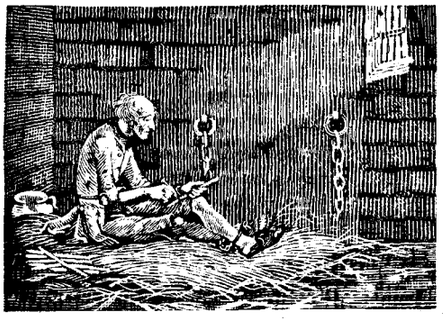
But although this sort of psychiatry still exists to a certain extent in the United States and some other Western countries, the great bulk of psychiatry has been and

continues to be of an entirely different nature, what Szasz calls Institutional Psychiatry. Here, the individual is "treated" by a psychiatrist (or something similar) who is *paid by someone else*; generally, by the State. Institutional Psychiatry, as contrasted with the voluntary sort, also enjoys certain... advantages: it disposes of the police power, and may and characteristically does *compel* people to undergo treatment; and the methods it is permitted to employ—by no means rarely—include electroshock, surgical destruction of parts of the brain, and the forcible administration of drugs such as anectine (which causes experiences similar to dying by suffocation). This is occurring now, in America.

Soviet psychiatry is, of course, purely and simply Institutional Psychiatry, and, just as it is no accident that State ownership of the means of communication in the USSR has led to total State control, so a system of completely State-financed psychiatry has led logically to the consequences of which everyone is by now aware. (Interestingly, Dr. Lawrence C. Kolb, recently appointed by Governor Carey to head the New York State Mental Hygiene services, has praised Soviet psychiatry for "the facility with which effective decisions and actions are made in regard to the economic, social, legal and vocational life of the patient.")

Szasz demonstrates that, from its beginnings, government-funded and -sponsored psychiatry has functioned as an enforcer of the existing order. In particular, the notion of "mental illness" has played the role of stigmatizing and invalidating those who were in one way or another out of step with socially and governmentally sanctioned modes of conduct. In this way, it was a mere translation into more acceptable "modern" terms of the earlier ideas of "sin" and "heresy," and may be viewed as their positivist analogue. As Szasz says: "The metamorphosis of the medieval into the modern mind entailed a vast ideological conversion from the perspective of theology to that of science. My thesis is that the development of the concept of mental illness is best understood as part of this change."

Since the real meaning of certain modern movements and ideas can often by seen more clearly in their earlier formulations—because they were more naively stated, or simply because the lapse of time brings a certain cultural distance—many of Szasz's best illustrations of this truth about Institutional Psychiatry can be found in examples from its founders. Thus, Benjamin Rush, the great pioneer of American psychiatry (whose portrait adorns the seal of the American Psychiatric Association—quite rightly so, since he was basically a totalitarian of the first water) asserted after the American Revolution that: "The excess of the passion for liberty... constitutes a form of insanity, which I shall take the liberty of distinguishing by the name of *anarchia*." Another mental illness which Rush "discovered" was "Derangement in the Principle of Faith, or the Believing Faculty," an instance of which dread disease was "persons who refuse to admit human testimony in favour of the truths of the Christian religion." And if the reader wishes to be freed from the spell of psychiatrism once and for all, he or she need only read Chapter 11 of Szasz's *The Manufacture of Madness*, on the mental illness invented by late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century psychiatry—"masturbatory insanity." Here the reader will find the founders of American, French, and British psychiatry—not only Rush, but Esquirol, Maudsley, and others—promoting this almost incredible fraud, whereby masturbation was a major cause, as well as symptom, of insanity. The chapter has to be read to be believed—little girls who masturbated "excessively" were forced to undergo clitoridectomies, and, in 1891, the president of the Royal College of Surgeons, James Hutchinson, sent up a trial balloon for the castration of little boys with the same habit (note the sexism involved in the differential treatment); this, if only public opinion permitted its adoption, would be a "true kindness" to the patients, he said. But, gradually, as society relented and masturbation became a socially more accepted practice, "masturbatory insanity" was undiscovered by psychiatrists.



As it happens, we ourselves have been witnesses to a very similar case of undiscovery, greatly reinforcing Szasz's argument. On December 15, 1973, the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association, speaking in the name of the Association, unanimously voted to alter a position it had held for almost a century, and decided that homosexuality was not, after all, a mental disorder. An examination of the rationale furnished for this action gives us, I think, an incomparable insight into the true nature of psychiatry's "conceptual structure."

The central and astounding fact is that, in the statement presented by Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, spokesman for the APA, *there is not the meagerest reference to any recent "scientific" findings or new "data"* which might have led the psychiatrists to revise their traditional view of homosexuality. The only argument *at all* that can be gathered from the statement is that, since a "significant proportion" of homosexuals seem to be satisfied with their lifestyle, show no "signs" of any other kind of mental disturbance, and can "function quite effectively," therefore homosexuals should not be classified *per se* as mentally ill.

Actually, scientific reasoning had nothing whatsoever to do with the change of policy. Its motive was purely and simply *political*, and Spitzer admits as much. In his statement, he asserts that declassification "will thus help answer the charge of some members of our own profession, who claim that mental illness is a myth and that by labelling individuals we are simply acting as agents of social control." In a debate with lifelong queer-hunter Dr. Irving Bieber, published in the *New York Times*, Spitzer is even more explicit (in reading what follows, try to imagine a *real* scientist, say a physicist or biochemist, setting forth something similar as *the* grounds—or any grounds at all!—for revising a theory in his field): "*And the reason that this new proposal was unanimously passed* by the three committees of the APA and finally by the Board of Trustees is not that the American Psychiatric Association has been taken over by some wild revolutionaries or latent homosexuals. *It is that we have to keep in step with the times*. Psychiatry, which once was regarded in the vanguard of the movement to liberate people from their troubles, is now viewed by many, and with some justification, as being an agent of social control" (emphasis added). Bieber, who throughout is nervously aware that here politics is the name of the game, and who keeps sputtering that he is a "scientist," is challenged as to whether he would consider "asexuality" or celibacy to be a mental disorder. His reply is a treasure: "In individuals who have no operational sexuality, apart from those in certain professions, like the clergy, where it is demanded? Yes, I would."

No operational sexuality—I believe that used to be called "chastity." Really, someone somewhere along the line should have tactfully clued Bieber in to the fact that orthodox Christianity, for some two thousand years now, has required "no operational sexuality" of *everyone* who is not married. Can he really mean to say that the millions of Christians who have adhered through the centuries to this rule were "mentally ill"? One does not know whether to laugh or cry: men such as *this* have set themselves up as the arbiters of right and wrong—homosexuality is bad, no, good, no, still bad; chastity is *definitely* bad. Yet who, I wonder, made these MDs into judges over all those Christian saints, over all those Greek heroes? It *must* have been people like Bieber, Spitzer, and their colleagues whom Max Weber had in mind when he described the positivist social engineers of the future, for the description is perfect: carriers of "mechanized petrifaction, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance... specialists without mind, sensualists without heart—and this nullity imagines that it is the culmination of human history!"

For libertarians and anyone else friendly to freedom and the inborn dignity of each of us, there is only one option: to begin at once the phasing out of all government funding for psychiatric

purposes (senile people and those who would prefer to remain in an artificially protective environment for a while could be housed in hostels). In the case of research into and the carrying out of "behavior modification," the elimination of funding—in this question everything depends on the material base—should be complete and immediate.

Now, it is to be expected that, threatened in its very existence, the beast will turn surprisingly ugly, snarl, and try to bite back. There will be screams at the harm being inflicted on the poor "mentally ill," who will now lack "treatment" and loving care. A return to "Bedlam" will be imputed to us as our ultimate goal (but what we favor is simply *freeing* anyone who has not violated the rights of others). We will be accused of meanly preferring our own economic well-being to the "cure" of these unfortunates—this from the dear little saints who have been converting a vague public guilt into country homes and investing the rest for years. (In New York State, starting under Rockefeller, taxpayers have come to pay *one billion dollars a year* for "mental hygiene.") As a last resort, our own "mental health" will be impugned—but we know now that this is a spiggot they open and close at will, and I guess we will be able to live with their innuendoes. For, to Institutional Psychiatry and the psychiatric mode (as well as, for instance, to Marxism) can be applied Camus' deep statement: "We are struggling against an idea whose victory would mean the end of the world." □

The Public Policy

by Adam Meyerson

National Economic Planning Piffle

"That is exactly the purpose of these hearings.... This is advisory and consultative and hopefully out of this dialogue and discussion... we will come down to a much more clear and precise understanding of exactly what we are talking about and what we mean."

These are the words of Hubert Humphrey, at hearings before the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress, when he was asked what he meant by "planning" in introducing the "Balanced Growth and Economic Planning Act of 1975." Senator Humphrey, who may be President next year, has said he considers the bill "to be the single most important piece of legislation in my twenty-five years of service"; and an Initiative Committee for National Economic Planning—made up of prominent academics, businessmen, and labor leaders, and headed by Wassily Leontief, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, and Leonard Woodcock, president of the United Auto Workers—helped him draft it. The world economy, say the bill's proponents, is becoming so complicated, and the decisions facing the coming generation are going to be so tough, that we had better begin planning for the future, and discussing long-term goals rationally. But as Herbert Stein suggests in his excellent little study, *Economic Planning and the Improvement of Economic Policy* (American Enterprise Institute, 1975), it is a little "odd that the advocates of rationality and foresight should be unable to give a clear picture of 'exactly what we are talking about and what we mean.' "

Consider the case of Robert Heilbroner, economist, and member of the Initiative Committee. Not long ago, Mr. Heilbroner wrote a generally sensible article for the *New York Times Magazine* (January 25, 1976) on how America is drifting into planning. After describing how well a market economy responds to consumer preferences, he pointed out, quite rightly, some of the defects of the marketplace—e.g., its tendency to ignore external costs like pollution. He showed that "national economic planning," American-style, will not be a completely planned economy like the Soviet Union's, in which central planning boards dictate everything from the price of bread to the supply of buttons. He observed that American planning, while it might be coercive, will not be totalitarian, for the planning board will remain subservient to our elected leaders and democratic institutions. He predicted that the scope and direction of planning will vary according to unforeseen circumstances. He said that planning will be necessary to save American capitalism, although, forever the pessimist, he did not think it will be a panacea. But aside from offering some wise remarks on what planning will not be, he shed almost no light on what it will be.

Or consider the case of Myron E. Sharpe, another member of the Initiative Committee, and editor of *Challenge*, a magazine at the forefront of the planning vanguard. In a recent editorial describing a draft of Sen. Humphrey's bill (May-June 1975), he too tried to allay some widespread apprehensions. He acknowledged the difficulties of long-term projections, but he pointed out that American planning would be flexible; rather than sticking to outdated forecasts of economic trends, the plan would be revised every two years. He pointed out that American planning would not be based on French and Japanese models, which, he admitted, have not worked particularly well (even though these are the world's two most successful planning systems). But aside from a detailed explanation of the structural framework for planning, Mr. Sharpe could offer no greater inkling of what the process would involve than the tautological observation that planning would give us "a chance to consider goals in a systematic way" and "force us to think about the long run."

For the utmost in vagueness, however, one must turn to the legislation itself. Sen. Humphrey's bill would set up an Economic Planning Board in the Executive Office of the President and empower it to prepare a "long-term balanced economic growth plan": this plan would (1) "establish [national] economic objectives..."; (2) "identify the resources required for achieving the economic objectives of the plan by forecasting the levels of production and investment by [major sectors of the national and international economies]"; and (3) "recommend legislative and administrative actions necessary or desirable to achieve the objectives of the plan...." These second and third purposes, as we shall see later, could mean just about anything, but for the moment let us consider the goals that the bill directs the Economic Planning Board to focus on in establishing the nation's economic objectives: "full employment, price stability, balanced economic growth, an equitable distribution of income, the efficient utilization of both private and public resources, balanced re-

gional and urban development, stable international relations, and meeting essential needs in transportation, energy, agriculture, raw materials, housing, education, public services, and research and development." Can you imagine a more meaningless list of objectives? Certainly everyone wants to have balanced economic growth, but many people will disagree about the desirable balance, and some will even disagree about what the word "balance" means. How is the Economic Planning Board going to determine what is balanced economic growth, or what are national needs in housing? This is the important question, and in helping us answer it the present legislation is akin to the explanation that morphine causes sleep on account of its dormative faculty.

Now when intelligent men devote considerable energy to espousing such a vague proposal, one is entitled to be suspicious. Either they have not thought things through. Or they have something up their sleeves, and, like the totalitarians Orwell described so well in "Politics and the English Language," they deliberately use unclear words to obscure their real intentions. Fortunately, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the proponents of planning are guilty only of the former.

One example of this evidence is the transparent silliness of so many arguments for planning. Consider the way, for instance, in which proponents often point to previous planning efforts in trying to demonstrate the usefulness of national planning. Mr. Woodcock points to the success of the war planning office in mobilizing American industry and resources for World War II. Sen. Humphrey points to the success of NASA planning in landing a man on the moon. And nearly everyone points out that corporations are forever planning their future. It is one thing, however, to plan when you have an overriding concrete objective—in the case of war planning, to defeat the Axis; in the case of NASA, to land on the moon; in the case of corporations, to maximize profits. It is quite another to plan for an extraordinarily complex economy, where many measurable objectives—e.g., full employment and price stability—are often at odds with each other, and where many other objectives—e.g., "balanced" economic growth—are not even measurable. One simply cannot infer anything about the prospects of national economic planning from the success of war, space, or corporate planning. A much more appropriate model might be the complete failure of the Federal Energy Administration to fashion a coherent energy policy out of the contradictory and nebulous goals that dominate our thinking about the subject.

Let us stay with energy a moment, because another of the silly arguments often put forth is that if only we had had planning, many of our decisions about questions like energy would have been wiser. These, for example, are the words of Robert V. Roosa, Wall Street investment banker and member of the Initiative Committee: "How long ago,... if the radar had been in place and were capably manned, would an alert planning staff have signalled the dangerous inconsistency between the Federal Power Commission's consumer-oriented preference for low natural gas prices and the resulting shrinkage of new domestic production?" (*New York Times*, February 8, 1976). The problem with this question, however, is that you don't need planning to give such signals. Many alert economists pointed out this "dangerous inconsistency" 22 years ago when natural gas prices were first controlled. And secondly, even if a planning board gave such signals, there is no reason in a free society why anyone should listen to them. Even last year, when the danger of natural gas controls had become obvious to almost all responsible economists—and presumably to everyone who would staff an Economic Planning Board—it is interesting to note than Sen. Humphrey and five of the seven co-sponsors of his planning bill voted not to decontrol gas prices.

Another reason I think that proponents of planning have merely not thought through their subject is that their arguments are sometimes not just silly, but completely empty. Consider, for example, the following statement which appeared as the rhetorical climax in an article by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historian, and member of the Initiative Committee: "...it is hard to imagine a greater mess than the refusal to plan has got us into already: the worst inflation in a generation, the highest unemployment in 35 years, the worst decline in real output in nearly 40 years, the worst deficit in the balance of payments ever, the worst peacetime budgetary deficits ever, the worst energy shortages ever, the worst crises in municipal finance ever" (*Wall Street Journal*, July 30, 1975).

Now does Mr. Schlesinger actually believe what he has written? Of course not: a moment's reflection would have convinced him otherwise. First of all, while our economy is admittedly in a mess, it is not at all hard to imagine a worse one. One need only think of England, or India, or Argentina. One need only ponder the statistic that our real per capita income is higher today than it has been in all but

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two or three years, and therefore, that, with some very few exceptions, the average American is still better off materially than any average man has ever been in the history of the world.

Second, insofar as our economy is now in a mess, it is a worldwide phenomenon, and the two economies with the most celebrated planning systems—France and Japan—are in worse shape than we are. Japan indeed is suffering from the worst recession in decades as well as 25% inflation. It would be entirely inappropriate, of course, to blame the French and Japanese troubles on planning—the fault lies more with such things as the OPEC cartel and problems in the international money supply. But, by the same token, it is nonsense to blame America's present troubles on a "refusal to plan."

Finally, there are some perfectly straightforward reasons for some of the problems Mr. Schlesinger mentions. It was not a "refusal to plan" that was responsible for the largest peacetime budget deficits ever; rather it was the attitude, espoused by many proponents of planning, that we didn't have to worry about deficits. Nor was it a "refusal to plan" that led to our municipal fiscal crises; rather it was our tendency to elect irresponsible mayors like John V. Lindsay and Frank Rizzo who committed their cities to spend more money than they could possibly raise. And as for the simultaneous occurrence of high inflation and high unemployment, it is interesting to note that monetary and fiscal policy has in many ways been "planned" for at least thirty years.

But enough of Mr. Schlesinger: I have dwelt on his remarks because I think they typify so many arguments for planning. On the one hand, they are dramatic rhetorical poses by which he and his fellows can distinguish themselves from those benighted souls who fear planning. On the other hand, they are exercises in utopian wishful thinking: the economy is in sorry shape, and so people like Mr. Schlesinger declare—on the basis of no evidence—that things would be much better if only we had planning.

But the clearest illustration of how the proponents of planning have not really thought through their proposal, is that as their bill now reads, national economic planning would really bring about little change in the character of government policy-making. So as not to impede passage, the drafters of the bill have been careful to put their proposed planning system squarely in the existing framework of democratic and bureaucratic institutions. But in so doing, they have guaranteed that all decisions coming out of the planning process would be subject to the same electoral, interest-group, and bureaucratic pressures as present decisions.

To judge how little difference planning will make, one need only consider the (simplified) sequence of planning decisions that the current legislation envisages. (1) The Economic Planning Board draws up a Plan, in consultation with state, local, and regional planning agencies. (2) The Plan must be approved by a Council consisting of all cabinet members and the heads of the Federal Reserve Board, the Office of Management and Budget, the Federal Energy Administration, and the Council of Economic Advisers. (3) The President submits the Plan to Congress and, after lengthy hearings, the Joint Economic Committee introduces a resolution recommending adoption, rejection, or modification of the Plan. (4) This resolution must pass both Houses of Congress. (5) The President must implement the Plan as approved by Congress to make sure that departments and agencies in the executive branch act so as to further the objectives of the Plan; where necessary, Congress must pass specific enabling legislation. (6) The departments and agencies must follow instructions from Congress and the President.

Now it is obvious that at each of these six stages, the proposed Plan will be subjected to a furious debate, every pressure group and constituency putting in its two bits about the issues that concern it most. The proponents of planning have the notion that we can make our decisions in a systematic, rational way—first by deciding what our objectives are, and then by figuring out what the appropriate policies are for achieving them. But that is not the way a democratic and pluralistic polity works. By the time the Plan got through the higgling and bargaining of Congress—if it ever got through—it would look quite different from what the Economic Planning Board proposed, and there is no reason why it should be at all "rational" or systematic. Furthermore, the difficulty would only have begun. Congress must then pass all the specific legislation necessary to implement the Plan's recommendations, and constituent and lobbying pressures are usually greater in debates about specific legislation than in discussions of general principles. The President must make sure the bureaucracy implements the Plan, and he will naturally be lax in emphasizing those parts of the Plan with which he disagrees. Finally, bureaucracies, as everyone is pointing out these days, have their own momentum, and there is little reason to suppose they would follow Presidential or Congressional orders.

I therefore do not fear the coercive implications of planning as much as some other critics. Decisions under planning would be made much as they are now, that is to say in a hodgepodge and piecemeal manner; by the same people who make them now, i.e. by our elected leaders and representatives and their appointed bureaucrats; and under the same basic constraint that limits present policy, i.e. the near-impossibility of eliminating any program that appeals to any vested interest group. At best (or at worst), planning would modestly centralize some decision-making, and would lead to a little more regulation of our already overregulated economy. One wonders why such a trifling impact would inspire the proponents of planning to such enthusiastic panegyrics.

And this brings me to the other suspicion. I believe—and I hope—that the proponents of planning are merely engaged in wishful thinking and putting on dramatic poses. But suppose they do have something up their sleeves? In that case the vagueness of the present bill becomes frightening. Remember the second and third purposes of the Plan: to "identify the resources required for achieving the economic objectives of the plan" and "to recommend legislative and administrative actions necessary or desirable to achieve [them]." The closest Congress has come to following such purposes has been its feeble efforts to estimate energy needs and to propose certain automobile and construction taxes designed to conserve fuel. The proposed legislation stirred up an enormous debate—as automobile companies, unions, contractors, and environmental groups all lobbied extensively—and it is doubtful that Congress, under national economic planning, could legislate many such proposals.

The proponents of planning, however, frequently point out that Americans must be gently coaxed out of their fear of "planning." They want to prove that planning can operate in America without subverting democratic processes or liberties. But those second and third purposes of the Plan can obviously not be achieved in our present institutional framework: Planning would work much more "rationally" if decisions were made by the planning board itself, and perhaps the intention of its proponents is to establish the foothold for a Board which would gradually assume greater responsibility as the electorate grew more accustomed to the idea of "planning." In that case, the planning bill does have coercive implications—for those second and third purposes are so vague as to leave open the possibility of a planning board making all major decisions about how the economy should allocate its resources.

After all this, it may come as a surprise that I favor planning. I wouldn't call it "national economic planning" and I see no need to set up some highfalutin "Economic Planning Board." But the federal government is running increasingly out of control, and it is becoming increasingly clear that Congress and the executive branch have got to put their own houses in order: they have got to begin some serious planning. By this I do not mean that they should exercise greater foresight in anticipating the consequences of their legislative and administrative acts; consequences will always be unpredictable, and human judgments will always be fallible. I mean that they should pay closer attention to the results of their policies, and when those results are not what was intended, that they should revise the policies. This is an essential part of any real planning, and it is the refusal to engage in this, rather than any failure to consider objectives rationally and sys-

tematically, that constitutes our government's greatest "refusal to plan." Why should we have "affirmative action" policies that explicitly violate the civil rights legislation under which they are authorized? Why should we continue to require exacting tests for drugs when it has been convincingly shown that the delays in bringing drugs to market have caused more harm than any unsafe drugs that may have slipped through? Why should we have a Secretary of HEW who cannot even control his own department, because, as Karl O'Lessker recently described it in these pages (quoting Richard Nathan), "*unstructured and unmonitored spending* for social services was closing out virtually all [his] opportunities for new initiatives in the social-program area"? It is time that government began structuring and monitoring its spending and its policies.

The present planning bill, needless to say, envisions no such planning. It is rather an exercise in vagueness which will probably have little impact, but which, if it does have an impact, will expand government power without making government any more effective. Before we let anybody draw up the blueprint for our national economy, let us make sure at least that he knows how to draw up a bill. □

David J. Mandel

The West Side Faith

I was in the right-field grandstand at the Polo Grounds when Bobby Thomson homered off Ralph Branca. I was in the bleachers at Yankee Stadium when Al Gionfriddo robbed DiMaggio of a home run. And I was in the United States Courthouse when The Faith in the Innocence of Alger Hiss was born. I call it the West Side Faith in honor of the section of the city where I now live, and where, it seems to me, The Faith is most devoutly practiced.

It was the second Hiss trial, the one when he was convicted of perjury, that I attended. (The first trial had ended in a hung jury.) I was then in my first year at law school at New York University. I, a classmate named Gene Levitt, and a couple of other classmates whose names I can't remember took the subway down to Foley Square two or three times to watch the Hiss trial. Of course I didn't *do* anything there, no more than I did at Yankee Stadium or the Polo Grounds, but I was there.

I admit that at the time I was not aware of the full significance of the case. It was, of course, a complicated and extended event; it lacked the immediate comprehensibility of Thomson's homer or Gionfriddo's catch. But over the years I've observed The Faith closely, and now that it may have reached a crisis stage, I feel I have the obligation to speak out. The West Side Faith shares few characteristics with ordinary, familiar faiths. It has no Prince of Light, no Teacher of Righteousness.

The West Side Faithful have never even been especially fond of Alger Hiss—that they would deify him was always unthinkable for a host of reasons including his strange, sibilant name. Evidently, in order to flourish, The Faith needed no Prince of Light. It did have a Prince of Darkness, R.M. Nixon, slayer of Jerry Voorhees, mauler of Helen Gahagan, the three-o'clock-shadow man, lupine and vicious.

Clearly, had there been no Nixon, no matter the difficulty, it would have been necessary to invent him. Fortunately for The Faith and The Faithful, Nixon was there. The fact that he did nothing to cause Hiss's conviction except to arrange a meeting of Hiss, at Hiss's request, with Hiss's accuser, Whittaker Chambers, is of no importance whatever.

It was also absolutely imperative for the birth and growth of The Faith that its central, in fact, its only creed, The Innocence of Alger Hiss, be extremely unlikely. Faith is not needed in order to believe what is reasonable or plausible. To conclude that Alger Hiss was guilty of perjury demands no act of faith when you have: Hiss's Woodstock typewriter on which Chambers' documents had been typed; the documents in Hiss's handwriting; the documents with interlineations in Hiss's handwriting; the written notes of Chambers' interview with A.A. Berle nine years before; the car transferred; the rug delivered. In the face of this evidence (and a great deal more) to believe that Hiss was innocent does require faith, enormous faith.

In the first quarter-century following Hiss's conviction the West Side Faithful rarely wavered. For example, there is this dialogue with a West Side professor reported recently by Sidney Hook: "What kind of evidence would convince you that Chambers was telling the truth?" "Even if Hiss himself were to confess his guilt, I wouldn't believe it." That's faith! Compare: Could Judaism survive Moses' confession that the bush had indeed been reduced to ashes? What Christian would remain so were there to come to light Jesus' written confession that it wasn't leprosy but impetigo, and that His turning water into wine was accomplished by momentarily distracting the Disciples and quickly switching flasks?

Notwithstanding the devotion of many of The Faithful, The Faith has surely suffered some defections. The death-in-life of Richard Nixon, though it bears not a whit on Hiss's guilt or innocence, has changed the dramatic structure of The Faith. Sure, they can still kick Nixon around, but the old enthusiasm is pretty much gone.

There are additional reasons for concluding that The Faith is having a hard time now and may face worse in the future. To begin with, since Solzhenitsyn, it has become much harder to view Communist Party membership (and, *a fortiori*, espionage) during the thirties and forties as reasonable or even justifiable political behavior. Similarly, the analogy between the HUAC hearings of twenty and thirty years ago and a Salem witch hunt is now harder to accept. So, while I am sure that Joe McCarthy will never be enshrined on the West Side, the climate now is different and it is no help to The Faith.

In this new climate, the emergence of infidel critics and historians, untainted by any Nixon connection, is especially distressing to The Faith. Professor Irving Younger of Cornell Law School contributed to the August 1975 issue of *Commentary* a detailed analysis of the trial transcripts. Younger's conclusion that Hiss was clearly guilty generated some angry responses for *Commentary*'s celebrated letters section, but the hit was palpable. The April 1, 1976 issue of the *New York Review of Books* will surely cut deeper and wider for it contains a devastating review, written by Professor Allen Weinstein of Smith College, of a new Faithful Hiss book by John Chabot Smith. Weinstein's conclusion "...that Hiss has been lying about his relations with Chambers for nearly thirty years," is especially significant because Weinstein had sued successfully to obtain the FBI files and he also had access to the records of Hiss's defense counsel. Professor Weinstein's book on the Hiss case, to be published late this year, will undoubtedly do The Faith no good.

Still, faiths can suffer a lot and yet survive. Moreover, The Faith may have gained adherents—and new strength—from Hiss's readmission to the Massachusetts Bar late last year, and J.C. Smith's book, Weinstein's criticism notwithstanding, will be persuasive to some. Hence, I doubt the correctness of the prediction by Philip Nobile in the April *Harper's* that, "The Alger Hiss affair is tending toward final judgment." If by "final judgment" Nobile means that soon we'll all either be converted to The Faith or that The Faithful will utterly disappear, like the followers of Sabbatai Zevi or the Shakers, then he is almost certainly wrong. I was there at the beginning, you see, and I know. □

Postwar American Conservatism

It is a measure of Mr. George Nash's great good sense that in a book on American conservatism he begins by disclaiming any intention or need to define "conservatism." Far more important is it, he rightly says, "to get on with the task of explaining what conscious conservatism in the United States has been since World War II." Such exemplary diffidence comes as a mighty relief after so many years of enduring the windy dicta of all those self-appointed guardians of conservative purity who never tired of proclaiming what the *true* conservative position *had* to be on everything and everyone from Abel to Zoroaster. Not myself being a conservative when I first started regularly reading their writings, I was not especially offended at the spectacle of one set of ideologues telling another that they were unfit to wear the colors. It was a decade later, during the sixties, when that sort of thing began to annoy me on behalf of such friends as Ben Rogge, who had at least as good a claim to conservative credentials as did all those hot-eyed young Torquemadas who were insisting that people like Rogge were heretics because they hadn't much stomach for holy wars and even less for ramming orthodoxies down anyone's throat.

But George Nash, happily, whatever his own convictions on these matters, sees it as no part of his assignment to declare judgments in favor of any of the litigants. Instead, in the coolest, most thoughtful way, he goes about charting all the streams and rivulets of *self-identified* conservative thought that flowed together after 1945 to make a goodly river, if not exactly a raging torrent.

The flow began with the anti-New Deal free marketeers and libertarians like Albert Jay Nock, Friedrich Hayek, and Ludwig von Mises, who regarded individual freedom as the supreme human value, a free market economy as an indispensable requisite to its attainment, and the state as its inevitable enemy. Soon they were joined, if only nominally, by that very different group of thinkers such as Richard Weaver and Russell Kirk who conceived the Good Society as necessarily hierarchical, traditionalist, and profoundly inimical to mass culture. (The two chapters in which Nash describes this species of conservatism are entitled, appropriately, "The Revolt against the Masses" and "The Recovery of Tradition and Values.")

The next identifiable group of conservative thinkers gathered under a banner which bore but a single device, Anti-Communism. The most familiar names here are James Burnham and Whittaker Chambers, though it is worth noting that a great deal of the polemical firepower came from such Central European émigrés as Gerhart Niemeyer, Stefan Possony, and Robert Strausz-Hupé. For these men the evil and menace of Communism approached apocalyptic dimensions. Chambers more than anyone else gave this strain of conservative thought its characteristic tone. Nash cites his "three essential themes—the sense of titanic struggle, the interpretation of that struggle as God versus Man, and the belief in the fundamental continuity of liberalism and Communism...." Chambers' influence was immense: "it is doubtful," says Nash, "that the experience of Communism would have seared the conservative consciousness as irrevocably as it did were it not for... Chambers and the trial of Alger Hiss." William F. Buckley, Jr., John Chamberlain, William Rusher, and Ralph de Toledano were among those most deeply affected by Chambers' themes.

The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945

by George H. Nash
Basic Books $20.00

Most of the rest of the book consists of a comprehensive account of the swirls and eddies of conservative thought during the fifties and sixties. This may sound boring but isn't. For one thing, Nash writes well and manages never to be tedious in his exposition. For another, the men whose work he treats were largely a colorful crowd whose zest for combat was exceeded only by their sense of Mission—and they saw nothing in their Mission to discourage them from having at one another (not to mention at liberals) with murderous enthusiasm. So it all makes for good lively reading, and for the reviewer the great temptation is to join in the melee at this safe distance of time. I shall resist doing so, except to make certain observations relevant to conservatism's present-day political situation.

* * *

Anti-Communism continues to be the most conspicuous strain in conservative music. Dumbfounded, rendered almost mute a few years ago by a conservative President's opening to Peking and pursuit of detente with the Soviet Union, ardent anti-Communists have now found their voices again. Chambers is dead but Alexander Solzhenitsyn is a more than adequate replacement for him. For he is not only a great writer and *bona fide* refugee from Soviet tyranny but an organthunderous exponent of the demonological view of Communism—and he has earned the right to it. Nothing I shall say in the following paragraphs is intended to question Solzhenitsyn's moral and literary greatness or his right to condemn Communism in apocalyptic terms.

As to the native American breed of anti-Communist, it is not very difficult to understand why persons of a conservative bent would find Communism repellent both as to philosophy and operations. What *is* difficult to account for is the tendency to see it as metaphysically evil. Perhaps my own inability to see it so bespeaks a fundamentally trivial cast of mind. I may be excused for preferring a different explanation. It seems obvious to me that what is at issue here is a matter not of intellect but of personality, for it requires a certain personality type to perceive political conflict in theological terms. Certainly it does not involve differences of interpretation of a complex set of empirical data. Nor, let me quickly add, does a nontheological evaluation of Communism mean a value-free evaluation. One can perfectly well condemn Stalinism or Brezhnevism (or Maoism or Titoism or any other form of authoritarian collectivism) without invoking eschatology, Gnosticism, or the War between Heaven and Hell.

One can perfectly well condemn Stalinism or Brezhnevism (or any form of authoritarian collectivism) without invoking eschatology, Gnosticism, or the War between Heaven and Hell.

But the policy consequences of these differing modes of perception are enormous. Opposition to Communism on economic and political grounds will lead to containment abroad, wary watching at home. Opposition to it on theological grounds will lead to calls for Holy War abroad, state-imposed orthodoxy at home. The former characterizes official U.S. policy since World War II; the latter, the dominant conservative counterpoint to that policy. They help to explain, too, why conservatism has been such a bust at

the polls: for all their undoubted dislike and distrust of Communists and Communism, the American people have had no inclination for wars of liberation in Eastern Europe, let alone Vietnam, and were more scared than amused by Senator Goldwater's 1964 remark about "lobbing an H-bomb into the men's room at the Kremlin." Put another way, ordinary Americans have never been able to work themselves up to the theological fever-pitch of anti-Communism that has characterized so much of postwar conservative thought, which in turn has tended to repel rather than attract voter support.

A related point has to do with conservative indulgence for anti-Communist but decidedly undemocratic governments elsewhere in the world. There is a "so's-your-old-man" quality about much of this, but I can't help reflecting that while conservatives have been largely justified in assailing anti-Fascist liberals for their willingness to forgive, forget, or ignore Communist enormities, that same brush dipped into a different barrel of tar will deface conservative pretensions as well. For it is notoriously true that, for many of the most ardent anti-Communists, the late Generalissimo Francisco Franco was something of a cult hero and his Falangist dictatorship the model of a well-ordered state. For my part, being upper-middle-class in income and tastes and a bit soft on Roman Catholicism into the bargain, I should much rather be dictated to by Spanish Fascists than by Russian Communists. But I am not self-deluded or self-indulgent enough to try to erect a matter of personal preference into a high political principle. Tyranny is tyranny. And for anyone who claims to value freedom as he values the air he breathes, it will hardly do to find virtue in one brand of tyranny on the grounds that it is ideologically opposed to a different brand.

The point here is that one large group of conservative thinkers isn't all that addicted to freedom. Those who entered the movement via Traditionalism and anti-Communism see freedom as at best an instrumental value, useful only insofar as it conduces to the pursuit or maintenance of other, more fundamental values—order, for example, or piety, or privilege. This is something of what Friedrich Hayek talked about in his famous essay, "Why I Am Not a Conservative." In it he spoke of "the characteristic complacency of the conservative toward the action of established authority and his prime concern that this authority be not weakened rather than that its power be kept within bounds."

Younger readers will find nothing surprising in Hayek's observation. To an older generation, however, it still comes as something of a shock to hear conservatives described as complaisant toward the exercise of established authority. To us, a conservative was primarily an unyielding anti-New Dealer, a bitter opponent of any accretions to government power. The graven image of a conservative was Senator Robert A. Taft. But by 1960, the year of Hayek's essay, with Taft dead the better part of a decade, that was no longer the case. Those who had succeeded to the largest part of the conservative mantle were of a strikingly different breed. "Appalled," in Nash's phrase, "by the erosion of values and the emergence of a secular, rootless, mass society"—and fervently anti-Communist to the core of their being—they began to speak as if individual freedom were *at best* too expensive a luxury for Western Civilization threatened by, indeed staggering under, the implacable onslaughts of secularism and Communism.

Far from being embarrassed by the charge that they are statist and illiberal, many present-day conservatives hasten to submit supporting evidence. *Vide* Russell Kirk: "True conservatism... rises at the antipodes from individualism. Individualism is social atomism; conservatism is community of spirit." *Vide* the Buckley/Bozell defense of McCarthyism, and especially their rationalizations for suppressing dissent. *Vide* anything Willmoore Kendall ever wrote on the subject of individual rights versus society's will. My own favorite, not cited by Nash, is from a mid-fifties symposium in which Kendall participated; I quote from memory and must therefore report it only as a paraphrase: *What this country needs,* said Kendall, *is a new orthodoxy to which all must conform; and those who do not conform must first be punished, then expelled.* The thoughtful reader would be repaid by letting his mind dwell for a few moments on the second part of the prescription, with its lip-licking advocacy of punishment and expulsion for nonconformists. It says all too much, I'm afraid, about that totalitarian streak in postwar conservatism that Hayek (among others) found so dismaying.

Kendall's lip-licking advocacy of punishment and expulsion for nonconformists says all too much about that totalitarian streak in conservatism that Hayek (among others) found so dismaying.

It is another of the great virtues of George Nash's account of postwar conservatism that he makes no attempt to paper over the cracks in the movement's walls. On the contrary, he describes with lucidity and care the efforts of "fusionists" like the late Frank Meyer to map the common ground on which all, or most, conservatives might comfortably stand. He died trying. Nash thinks he came closer to success than I do, but each reader will be able to form his own judgment thanks to the author's full disclosure of the record. It is certainly true that an all-star cast of conservative luminaries told Meyer in effect to go peddle his fusionist papers elsewhere (Russell Kirk, for example, accused him of being "filled with detestation of all champions of authority"). But it is also true that even so fierce an opponent as L. Brent Bozell, in a 1972 interview, conceded that fusionism had become the *de facto* consensus, and the more judicious William F. Buckley spoke of a conservative "symbiosis."

Nash goes on to argue that "Meyer and other conservatives never tired of stressing that conservatism was not an ideology, complete with sacred texts or a Fourteen Points... [I]t did not try to encapsulate all its beliefs in a handbook of doctrines." Well, yes and no. Quite a number of conservatives, Kirk and Kendall among them, continued to try to tell other conservatives what they *had* to believe in order to *be* conservatives. Meanwhile, Hayek and the libertarians denied they themselves even were conservatives. This was not crankiness on Hayek's part. As we have already seen, he at least understood the word "conservative" to have a certain quite definite content, and he felt altogether justified in denying that it was applicable to himself.

So, despite his initial good resolution not to get hung up on the question, Nash, like the proverbial poor sufferer poking at an aching tooth, keeps returning to the problem of conservative unity, or lack thereof. Every hundred pages or so he feels compelled to reiterate the common grounds upon which conservatives could stand. It is worth quoting his final effort:

"There was a fascinating heterogeneity in conservative thought, yet most right-wing intellectuals readily agreed on certain fundamental 'prejudices' which they articulated and refined in many different ways: a presumption (of varying intensity) in favor of private property and a free enterprise economy; opposition to Communism, socialism, and utopian schemes of all kinds; support of strong national defense; belief in Christianity or Judaism (or at least the utility of such belief); acceptance of traditional morality and the need for an inelastic moral code; hostility to positivism and relativism; a 'gut affirmation' of the goodness of America and the West. These were but a few constituent elements of the working conservative consensus."

Mr. Nash doesn't need me to tell him that more than a few "right-wing intellectuals" will not be very eager to clamber aboard that particular platform. Not only the most inflexible libertarians, say, and Randians, who don't regard themselves as right-wingers anyway, but many in the Chicago School would doubtless have trouble accepting the moralistic and religionizing planks and perhaps

even the "strong national defense" proposition if accepting it entails a Goldwaterish open-handedness toward the Pentagon. Moreover, the definition is defective at least as much for what it leaves out as for the too much it includes. Most notable is the absence of any reference to a limited government of separated powers. Here indeed the chasm dividing groups of self-identified conservatives yawns wider and wider in our own day. For while many still cling passionately to that vanishing ideal of a less statist society, other members of the Great Fusion find it decreasingly enchanting.

Let me call this latter group, for want of a better term, the neopopulists. Their most articulate spokesman is Mr. Kevin Phillips; their intellectual and spiritual progenitor was Willmore Kendall. For all their outcries against bureaucrats, they are not opposed in principle to government efforts to promote security, whether national or economic, not caring that it takes large numbers of bureaucrats to accomplish such efforts. Their own most eagerly desired goals are to crush the Eastern elites, to elevate to unchallengeable orthodoxy the folkviews of "the virtuous people," to restore a nearly vanished order to this monstrously permissive society. Kendall himself had, in his own words, "sworn no vow of absolute fidelity... to free enterprise à la von Mises...." Reflecting on this, Nash comments that "He had even attacked the widespread conservative belief that political freedom and free enterprise were inseparable." And "He explicitly dissociated himself from the 'Tenth Amendmentite anxieties' that James J. Kilpatrick and Russell Kirk express...."

Whatever else this species of neopopulist conservatism might be, it is a very long way from the more familiar and coherent verities of a Hayek or a Kirk. But I am (unhappily) inclined to think it is the wave of the future for politically active conservatism. One hears its characteristic accents more and more frequently in the writings of such stalwarts as Jeffrey Hart and William Rusher. Notwithstanding its several oddities, it is a not altogether inexplicable development. What has transformed Kendall's quirkiness and idiosyncrasies into the intellectual driving force behind a political movement is the sweet smell of electoral success. Flogged to attention by Kevin Phillips, a growing number of conservatives now see the way to a true conservative hegemony in this country: a coalition of forces as broad and powerful as the hated Roosevelt Coalition—Reaganites and Wallaceites, together at last, one and indissoluble.

Pray don't fall laughing to the floor just yet. If the imagined spectacle of Bible-belt bookburners, Texas oil millionaires, New York construction workers, and California financiers marching together behind a common banner seems irresistibly funny, control your mirth long enough to recollect the component parts of the New Deal: as heterogeneous and improbable as anything Kevin Phillips is proposing, it ruled us for twenty years, sanctified by five successive Presidential elections. All that is lacking at the moment is a great popular issue and a great popular leader, neither of which is yet in sight. But Phillips is surely right in wanting to prepare the ground.

In order for conservatism to be electorally successful it will have to transform itself into a kind of welfare-state conservatism—socially conservative but economically liberal.

What will appear especially intriguing for readers of George Nash's book—a history of the conservative *intellectual* movement—are the intellectual difficulties that lie in the way of bringing conservatives together on a political platform fashioned, in effect, by Willmoore Kendall. It is no great problem for Phillips precisely because political power, not intellectual consistency, is the object. But other conservatives may well stop to ask themselves whether electing a congenial President is worth the sacrifice of fundamental conservative principles.

For the hard fact is that Wallaceite construction and assembly line workers and inflation-ridden retirees are not going to give their votes to a candidate who preaches free enterprise—not when the opposition can so easily translate abstract doctrine into specifics about the elimination of social security, medicare, unemployment compensation, and so on. And there will be no conservative victories, certainly not at the national level, without the votes of these people. What this means, then, as Kevin Phillips recognizes, is that in order for conservatism to be electorally successful it will have to transform itself into a kind of welfare-state conservatism—which is to say socially conservative but economically liberal.

At least one major component of the conservative movement, the Old Whigs and libertarians, would find this the worst of all possible worlds. Nor is it easy to imagine joy filling the hearts of the Traditionalists, whose world-weary elitism would find scant comfort in a socioeconomic order based on the raw will of the masses. And what about a conservative like William F. Buckley, Jr., surely the most influential figure in the entire movement? Distrusted, indeed detested as he was by Kendall, how pleased would he be with a system to which Kendall would be Publius, if not St. Paul, a system which in practical effect would be the fruit of a marriage between rednecks and hardhats? After the first fine flush of joy over having dished the *New York Review* crowd, Buckley would not, I think, be ecstatic.

It is important to be right about this because Buckley has for so long been so exemplary as well as influential. In much the same way that Robert Taft was Mr. Republican, William Buckley is Mr. Conservative. If it is correct to assume that he would be unwilling to lend his immense prestige to a vote-gathering enterprise as intellectually shoddy as neopopulist conservatism, its chances for electoral success may not be worth the time even to think about.

Yet there is in all of this gloom a ray, and perhaps more than a ray, a beam, of hope for the kind of conservative whose concern is much more for limiting the power of government than for elevating the folk wisdom of the masses to official Orthodoxy. This hope consists in the emergence of what the *Wall Street Journal* has called a "neo-conservative movement," staffed to a considerable extent by people who less than a decade ago were card-carrying New Deal/Fair Deal liberals. Some of the most prominent names here are Edward Banfield, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, Daniel Moynihan, and Norman Podhoretz; their most influential organs of opinion are *Commentary* and *The Public Interest*. While they have picked up on many of the themes of common garden-variety conservatism, two seem to stand out: anti-Communism and anti-Big Governmentism.

The anti-Communism so forcefully espoused by neo-conservatives resembles that of earlier conservatives in being inalterably suspicious of (primarily) Soviet intentions, and therefore favorable to a strengthened national defense and disinclined toward detente. It differs, however, very significantly in having none of that crusading zeal, that liberationist, Armageddon-now quality that so characterized—and stigmatized—the earlier variety. Its central impulse is pragmatic rather than metaphysical. If, for Burnham and Chambers, the late Dean Acheson was a cowardly appeaser, for Kristol and Podhoretz he was a hard-nosed, tough-minded statesman who played an anti-Communist hand with skill and courage. Nash puts the matter well when he discusses the "subtle change in the conservative foreign policy of the early 1970s... [as it] more and more came to resemble the old liberal policy of containment."

Pragmatism characterizes also the transformation of Old Liberals to neo-conservatives on the question of government control of society. Awakened from their dogmatic slumbers by a succession of Great Society policy failures and by the wise and eloquent account of them by Daniel Moynihan, many of them began to realize not only that Big Government was incapable of solving the social problems

they saw around them but that, more often than not, governmental initiatives only made things worse. This dawning awareness then began to have broader ramifications. The neo-conservatives developed a new understanding of, and respect for, the institutions of capitalism. They came to see that massive government intervention in the market served far more often to dampen productivity and inflate the currency than to cure economic ills. And above all they came to understand that the Behemoth our well-intentioned liberalism had created was almost, if not already, out of control, growing into a welfare state so vast, so stifling, so overpowering in its control of so much that had once been private, that it seemed hardly worth the effort to try to inhibit its carcinomic growth.

But none of this was very doctrinaire, very "principled" in classic conservative terms. The neo-conservatives held certain values in common with most thoughtful Americans and they discovered that these values were threatened by current trends and policies which they themselves had been espousing. So they changed. Old Conservatives joined them on foreign policy. They joined the Old Conservatives on domestic policy. A most extraordinary realignment (to use Nash's apt word) is taking place.

But what electoral consequences does it portend? The reason heretofore why conservatism hasn't been more successful at the polls is that most Americans tend not to be very ideological in their thinking. They are concerned far more with policies than with philosophical principles. (This is not at all to say that they are unprincipled.) And conservative *policies* have not, since 1930, had much sales appeal. To be sure, most Americans have been resolutely anti-Communist—though it is unlikely they ever preferred Burnhamite liberation to the containment policies of official Washington. To be sure, also, public opinion surveys during the last two decades have shown broad public hostility to federal court initiatives in the areas of criminal justice and school busing, on both of which liberals have tended to side with the courts.

But on almost all other large policy issues, bread-and-butter liberals have had much the best of the argument. Whether minimum-wage increases, federal aid to education, medicare, supplemental unemployment benefits, or any of the rest, whenever economic security (real or imagined) confronted conservative principles, the latter never stood a chance. Nash remarks the enormous popularity of Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* (ghost-written for him by L. Brent Bozell). But Goldwater was buried under one of the great electoral landslides of American history. Republican partisans may complain that this was a result of Eastern liberal media misrepresentation of Goldwater's positions. Conservatives can hardly make the same complaint, because for the most part those "misrepresentations" were statements of perfectly familiar conservative positions drawn straight from the pages of the Senator's best-seller. *The votes just weren't there.* Nor, as I argued earlier, is there much prospect they will be so long as conservatism is debarred from espousing welfare-state economics. Hence Kevin Phillips' impassioned emphasis on social rather than economic issues. Hence, too, perhaps, William Buckley's bittersweet description of himself as "a conservative grown up in the knowledge that victories are not for us."

The essential challenge, as Nash so well puts it in a paraphrase of a Whittaker Chambers remark, is "to defend enduring truths in a language appealing to America in the 1970s." After the word "language" add the phrase "and policies." That, I think, will provide a truer measure of the immensity of the task. □

RICHARD STRAUSS
(continued from page 8)

which will remain a part of our cultural heritage. As a conductor he brought new life to the great masterworks of the past, as a composer he gave new color and powers of expression to the orchestra, and in his tone-poems, his songs, and such operas as *Salomé*, *Rosenkavalier*, and *Capriccio*, he enriched our lives. Finally, for all the horrors our century has been guilty of, it is worth reminding ourselves that he was also a man of our time. □

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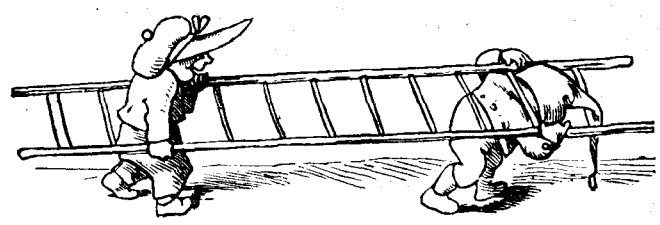

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Book Review/Suzanne R. Weaver

Alexander Bickel and the Heart of Liberalism

Alexander Bickel's last book, *The Morality of Consent*, is not an easy one to assess; and the job of criticizing it is doubly hard for someone who did not know the man. Bickel's friends attest that his life's importance lay in more than what he wrote, wonderful though that writing was; he was also a model of intellectual honesty and political courage in a time marked by no great measure of either. And even Bickel's writing alone poses a special challenge: it is hard to mark the resting place of a mind that insisted on how few such places there are, and that was prematurely stilled in its travels. Yet this last book, compiled from some of Bickel's later lectures and essays, does offer a self-contained argument. We find Bickel continuing his task of rescuing American liberalism from the corruptions to which it has lately fallen prey, without sacrificing the heart of that liberalism itself.

To do this, Bickel finds it necessary to examine the origins of the liberal tradition and to reconsider the question of what is central to it. We usually see the source of modern liberalism in the "contractarian" tradition exemplified by John Locke. But in fact, says Bickel, the idea of a political contract is only a notion that happens to have "captured" the name of liberalism; Bickel himself "would contest its title to it."

The reason for his contest is of interest. One commonly thinks of contractarianism as a doctrine whose early exponents, at least, despaired of the possibility that human beings could come to reasoned agreement about most political matters; the only government that could be tolerated, therefore, was a minimal and morally unprepossessing one. On this reading of things, the troubles that liberalism has found itself in recently cannot be blamed simply on its contractarian beginnings, but come from our demands that the old arrangements, intended for limited and noncontroversial functions, perform a growing number of morally-charged and divisive ones.

But Bickel would disagree. The whole contractarian tradition, he says—not just the form Rousseau gave it, and not just the more modern variants—is marked by a moral absolutism of its own, a moralism that is no corruption of it but that lies at its very core. The idea of a contract that individuals make with the state carries with it the idea of an irreducible obligation to the state: this obligation is given in return for benefits, it is true, and presumes to base itself on willing consent, but in fact the bounds of that consent are very wide, and within them the duty of an individual is to obey. From a state founded on such principles, there is no recourse short of revolution; and that possibility, as Locke recognizes, is an unlikely one: "Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the slips of humane frailty will be borne by the people, without mutiny or murmur." So this obligation is in most matters quite clearly binding, and it can be pressed into the service of a morally aggressive and presumptuous government as easily as it can serve a more modest one.

One might answer Bickel's description of dangers by insisting once again on the limited nature of the functions that this kind of state can rightfully exercise; but such an answer would not satisfy him. For one thing, its defense of liberty is from Bickel's point of view too weak; it leaves in the hands of government power-

The Morality of Consent

by Alexander Bickel
Yale $10.00

ful means of coercion, and contents itself with issuing pious warnings about the uses of those means. And on the other side, it is an argument which unnecessarily limits the authority of government to act for the good.

The limitation is unnecessary because for Bickel there is another, more appropriate tradition on which modern liberalism can rest, a tradition of state action without the dangers of moral absolutism. It is, surprisingly enough, the tradition exemplified by Edmund Burke. Burke is, for Bickel, not primarily the social conservative whose defense of existing institutions and values was all the stronger for knowing how artificial they are. Bickel sees these things in Burke, and appreciates them; but his Burke is even more the proto-utilitarian Burke of the "computing principle," who insisted on judging political action by the costs and benefits in particular cases rather than on the basis of fixed ideas about rights and obligations, and who therefore insisted that government, if was to act, needed not merely the abstract consent of society but its real and express consent.

Bickel argues that this liberalism of Burke's, with its refusal to place rigid limits on state action and its avoidance of the language of fixed obligation, provides a surer guarantee of individual freedom than the contract theorists ever did. Instead of giving individuals only infrequently exercised rights and overly restrictive duties, Burke's thought requires government to seek the active and continuing assent of the constituent elements of society. Instead of a government which is safe for liberty only when it does not act, Burke gives us a government which can act, and act safely, because it is bound by something more compelling than the empty, formalistic rights wrested from it in some abstract and long-forgotten contract. Burke's language—a language of the concrete, devoid of talk about fundamental duties—strips government of a moral authority that can easily become a self-righteous tyranny, and does so without putting unwanted bounds around the spheres of activity that government can enter.

Bickel called himself a Burkean liberal —sometimes a Whig—and his positions on the political issues of our time were, to many, a source of at least occasional surprise. His arguments for judicial restraint, his final insistence that universities must remain neutral in the political struggles of the late 1960s, his belief throughout that we must resign ourselves to the imperfections of the social justice we can achieve—these positions stood alongside what in another man would have been labeled simply as arguments of the conventional Left. Much of this book is taken up with such left-Burkean arguments; but, it becomes clear, they are arguments which are not in fact surprising, or whimsical, or inconsistent, but which instead follow naturally from Bickel's first principles.

One of these arguments is to be found in an essay on the idea of citizenship—an idea which, in its American context, a more conventional mind than Bickel's might have thought deserving of a special Burkean reverence. Bickel emphatically denies any such reverence. He says that the notion of citizenship has practically no standing in American Constitutional law as a basis on which the state may distinguish among individuals. To give the baldest example, this country drafts aliens into the military service; and Supreme Court decisions in general have maintained that it makes little difference in one's relationship to the state whether or not one is a citizen. Even in the case of the right to vote, Bickel says, "it is not the Constitution" but only lesser law "that ties... that most symbolically charged act of participation in governance to the status of citizenship."

Bickel argues that this is as it should be —that even if in other areas of public life the term "citizen" is accorded more importance than in Constitutional law, it is the Court's disrespect which is the proper attitude. For to Bickel the belief that citizenship is crucial in political life is as dangerous as the belief that individuals are bound to the state by a contract—and dangerous for the same reasons. Citizenship, like a contract, assumes that there is some direct and specifiable relationship between individual and state, a relationship from which some people may

sometimes be excluded—for reasons of behavior, or mental incapacity, or race, or sex, for instance. If the enjoyment of rights or benefits in America depends on being a citizen, then those rights and benefits are always in danger, because the word "citizen" can be defined—and redefined—so as to leave some out. As Bickel puts it, "What is given can be taken away"; it is better not to give at all than to put in the state's hand another possible instrument of oppression.

For the same reasons, Bickel refuses to condemn in any general way the principle of civil disobedience. Bickel in fact opposed much of the practice of civil disobedience that accompanied the Vietnam war; but in this book, he insists on voicing his opposition in a way that leaves considerable scope for the principle of appeal to conscience. He by no means thinks that this conscience should be an unself-critical one; on the contrary, he insists that individuals who choose to disobey a given law are obliged to act in a way that honors the *idea* of law. Their actions must not be massive interferences with lawful process, or coercive in their immediate impact, or threatening of violence. But these are not obligations imposed by positive law, by the specific laws actually on the books; when it comes to these laws themselves, there can be no absolute duty to obey. Once again, Bickel's concern is to avoid embracing the dangers of the contractarian position, to avoid giving the state too-powerful procedures to enforce its will, to avoid doing away with the necessity for practically expressed, day-to-day consent.

Not all of Bickel's Burkeanism, of course, is Burkeanism of the Left; the same argument that leads to a relatively tolerant view of civil disobedience leads also to Bickel's well-known conservative views of the courts' political role. If government needs continuous consent, the judicial as well as the executive branch must subject itself to the constraints which that need imposes. It is this kind of nonpartisanship that gives Bickel's stance much of its appeal; but even more important, one feels specially grateful for his voice at a time when moralism of the Right and Left is too much with us, and the necessity for practical consent is too often forgotten.

Yet this stance also demands a special kind of self-discipline in society. Since government is not to be formally limited in the tasks it can legitimately perform, society must be limited in its demands; otherwise even a government with the weakest of formal claims on individuals will eventually find itself engaged in the moralistic coercion that Bickel despises. Since government is to be so limited in the attachments it can demand from individuals, these attachments must be offered freely, and nurtured in other places; otherwise we are not likely to see much of the self-critical posture that Bickel requires individuals to adopt when they consider rejecting the state's claims on them. Bickel enjoins caution and a certain agnosticism on the part of government; what he requires as well is caution and self-control in society, if government is not to be asked to do things it should not.

One who knows students of Bickel's knows that this burden he placed on private institutions was a burden he took on himself; the best of those he taught are quite clearly marked by their experience of him, and by the particular honesty and tolerance which reflect him. If he had not been so rare a man, one could more easily conclude that we are safe with the relationship he envisioned among government, individuals, and private institutions. But as things are—as, perhaps, our contractarian history has made us—it is hard to avoid doubting that Americans can be counted on to entertain those well-tempered opinions which alone can sustain Bickel's unlimited and unlimiting state. □

GUEST EDITORIAL
(continued from page 4)

own Party Congress, Brezhnev thundered condemnation: "There can be no question of compromise on matters of principle or reconciliation with views and actions contrary to the Communist ideology... A concession to opportunism may sometimes yield some temporary advantage but will ultimately be damaging to the party. Democracy is inconceivable without discipline and a sound social order."

Comrade Brezhnev can recognize a dangerous ideological heresy when he sees one. By accepting the principle of opposition parties, and by challenging the dogma of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the French are threatening the very foundation-stone of the Soviet regime—the legitimacy of Russia's "new class" autocracy. Lenin himself defined the proletarian dictatorship as "an unlimited power, sustaining itself by violence and not by law." He repeated and repeated, "The scientific meaning of the term 'dictatorship' is none other than unlimited power, unrestrained by any rules whatever, based directly on violence." He instructed the drafters of a new criminal code in 1922, "The courts must not ban terror... but must formulate the motives underlying it, legalize it as a principle, plainly, without any make-believe or embellishment. It must be formulated in the broadest possible manner."

We should never underestimate the influence of Lenin's basic Rousseauist anarchism and his dream of a workers' utopia; it was not for nothing that tears streamed down the beefy Brezhnev cheeks at the 1971 CPSU Congress as the delegates sang "The Internationale." Nor should we think it mere stagecraft that at this latest Congress Brezhnev's voice cracked with emotion for the only time in his five-hour speech as he re-

"I admire the way you make no apology or excuse about the excessive price of your tee shirts and buttons."

—Carolyn Coman
Northampton, Mass.

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buked the French national Communist ploy by proposing a monument in Moscow to "heroes of the world communist movement who fell at the hands of the class enemy." This, he said, "will symbolize our party's unfailing loyalty to the great cause of proletarian internationalism." When such men find themselves having to shoot down workers, as in Prague in 1968 and Poznan in 1970, or to debate the "dictatorship of the proletariat" doctrine with their French comrades, or to justify sending a balky mathematician to the booby hatch, we can expect some consequences in their crania. "The facts rebel," in George Paloczi-Horvath's classic phrase, forcing ideological adjustments, compromises, betrayals.

Granted, the French anti-Communists are right. We should not make too much of such "contradictions," just as we should not kiss them off as "just another gambit." The sixty-year record shows that the Bolshevik clique has managed to overcome such problems often enough. One is reminded of Milton Rokeach's marvelous experiment with "the Three Christs of Ypsilanti." He took three paranoid inmates of a Michigan insane asylum who each believed he was the Christ, put them together, and watched the incredible adjustments of their belief systems as they were confronted with fundamental contradictions: if you are Jesus, I cannot be Jesus; therefore something must be the matter with you and let me explain it to you and to myself... Obviously the megalomaniacs in the Kremlin can make marvelous adjustments to maintain their royal thrones.

Yet if one has even a scintilla of faith in the ultimate rationality of man (a faith that requires almost as much squirming adjustment and exclusion of uncomfortable contrary evidence as that of the three Christs or the Kremlin czars), one cannot help but welcome the French CP's small challenge. Somewhere there in the Kremlin, someone may rethink again the Leninist assumptions of 1917-22. Someone must repeat the rote justifications, and someone may stumble in the process and murmur the thought, "This really is a bunch of baloney."

And someone may go back to read the letters of Vladimir Korolenko, the venerable old revolutionary who, with but a few months to live, bitterly complained to Lenin of the growing Bolshevik tyranny. "Such things as freedom of conscience, assembly, speech, and the press," he wrote, "are, for European proletarians, not mere 'bourgeois prejudices' but necessary tools which mankind has arrived at only through lengthy and not unfruitful struggle and progress. Only you who have never fully known these freedoms nor learned to use them jointly with the people can call them 'bourgeois prejudices.' " The Soviets have recently discovered cybernetics, the science of automation, information feedback, and systems control. We were treated a few years back to the spectacle of Khrushchev, then the Great Proletarian Dictator, half ordering and half begging the scientists and technicians to criticize him when he was wrong about little details like growing corn and wheat with the wrong fertilizers or soils. What Comrade Korolenko was trying to tell the Great Proletarian Dictator of 1920 was that the multiparty system and freedom of the press are not mere "bourgeois prejudices" and expressions of class differentiation, but a method of inquiry. A society can have valid, responsive, relevant government only when the press is free and the feedback loop totally unclogged by censorship and fear, and when oppositionists can coalesce and openly express grievances. The current Kremlin comrades, to save their own skins, have made some efforts to destalinize. But they won't truly be safe, they won't be able to solve their production problems or build a creative, modern, humane state, until they return to the "rule of law" and individual civil rights. In short, until they deleninize.

Perhaps the French and Italian CPs are Trojan horses, but whose wall is being breached? The Soviet mentality is a closed mind, and anything that opens it to let in a little light and fresh air is healthy. The men who rule the Kremlin are men who lived through the Stalin era, debasing themselves during the terror in the interests of animal survival, and they have not yet been able to look easily within, to analyze their own history, to understand their own motivations and crippling handicaps, for the process is too painful.

Well, they might have to analyze their own history a little when Enrico Berlinguer, the Italian renegade, can stand in the Kremlin's Palace of Congresses and tell five thousand Soviet Party delegates: "The working class can and must perform its historical function in a pluralistic and democratic way... We are fighting for a socialist society that would guarantee respect for all individual and collective liberties, liberties of religion and culture, arts and sciences." It is delicious to see Berlinguer deliver an unmistakable endorsement of Italy's continued NATO membership to "contribute actively to detente and defend firmly the sovereignty of the Italian people against any foreign interference in our internal affairs." And to see, at the end of his speech, the brief television picture showing many delegates sourly in their seats during the "standing ovation" which protocol dictates for each foreign Communist Party leader.

And the Soviets may have to do some rethinking when the French party violates protocol by keeping Marchais at home and sending its No. 3 comrade, Guy Plissonnier. Plissonnier performed the remarkable feat of quoting Lenin on the necessity for democracy "right to the end" and explained, "For us, this implies the guarantee of all individual and collective liberties... This will be a socialism of the French sort. That means the various parties interested in its construction will take part with equality of rights and duties."

So here is one anti-Communist who will join with the French comrades in their symbolic burial of the doctrine of "the dictatorship of the proletariat." Let us challenge them to celebrate their deleninization with hymns to civil liberties and the virtues of yielding power peacefully after electoral reverses—and we should join their chorus. We should welcome their denunciations of the Soviet Ward 7 system, where political dissenters are given drugs that destroy their cerebral cells and convert them into cringing zombies. We should invite the Frenchmen's attention from Plyushch, who is free, to Bukovsky, who is not. We should explain that we understand the agony that facing such realities causes them, for the refusal of the promised kingdom to come is indeed a terrible burden for modern Promethean man, and those who have fled the painful reality of the human predicament into the false nirvana of revolutionary utopianism are due some understanding as they suffer withdrawal pains.

In this lovely detente era, we should also regard Brezhnev's proposal for a Moscow monument to the martyrs of world Communism as an opportunity for further convergence. After Khrushchev's destalinization speech twenty years ago Eugene Lyons proposed an American fund-raising campaign to help Khrushchev erect a suitable memorial to all Stalin's victims, among whom were the entire Old Bolshevik guard. Why not instruct Dr. Kissinger to advise Brezhnev if he will include all *those* martyrs, we'll help him erect his Moscow monument?

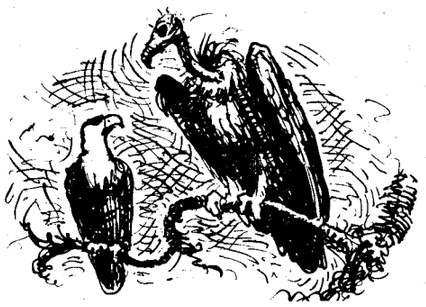
Clearly, the French CP action is a milestone, albeit a tiny one, in the process of change set in motion by Khrushchev's "Crimes of Stalin" speech. Someday, the reality that a modern, creative industrial democracy requires freedom will force the Kremlin crowd, in the interest of building their own power, to move from destalinization to deleninization. In the middle of the night in 1961 they took the corpse of Stalin out of that marble tomb on Red Square. One of these days they're going to have to take a new look at the remaining mummy. It deserves a reburial, too. □

Great American Series

My proposal then is to leave the liberty of the press untouched, to be exercised in its full extent, force, and vigor; but to permit the *liberty of the cudgel* to go with it *pari passu*. Thus, my fellow-citizens, if an impudent writer attacks your reputation, dearer to you perhaps than your life,... you may go to him as openly and break his head.... [I]f *the public* should ever happen to be affronted... with the conduct of such writers,... we should in moderation content ourselves with tarring and feathering and tossing them in a blanket.

—Benjamin Franklin

The Nation's Pulse



by Peter J. Rusthoven

Our Messianic Media

While it is not uncommon today for newsmen to figure in the headlines themselves, the achievements of CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr in this regard are little short of remarkable. During the Nixon Administration, Mr. Schorr was the target of a thorough federal investigation ordered by the President and/or his aides, which, when the story came out, was justified with the laughable assertion that the object of scrutiny—hardly a friend of the Nixon White House—was being considered for a government post. At some point during the developing saga of Watergate, this explanation was shown to be one of the relatively minor perfidies besmirching the record of Mr. Nixon and his crew, since Schorr's name appeared on the White House "enemies list," and the fabled tapes revealed that the cover story for the investigation was a complete fabrication. Herr Schorr bore up under the strain with just a touch of self-righteousness and a slight air of wounded dignity, and subsequently cashed in on his small celebrity by writing the introduction to the Dell paperback edition of the Senate Watergate Report.

Correspondent Schorr has moved on to bigger if not better things since his highly-publicized run-in with the now-fallen President. His latest escapade as newsman-turned-newsmaker involves, of course, his sale of the confidential report on the CIA by the House Committee on Intelligence. After obtaining this document by as-yet-unspecified means, Schorr selected an esteemed and responsible journal—the *Village Voice*—as his partner, promptly peddled his (or rather, the Committee's) wares for publication, and thereby demonstrated at one stroke his beliefs in free enterprise and the people's right to know. Alas, on this occasion huzzahs from all sides were not forthcoming. First, the *Washington Post* revealed that Schorr was the vendor in the above-described transaction. Schorr, a reflective fellow who understands that there are limits even to such principles as the people's right to know, huffed that this information was "off the record" and labeled its revelation by the *Post* "unconscionable." The House, no doubt irritated that its every supposedly confidential word in the national security area ends up as a headline in some tabloid or other, thought that whatever "unconscionability" was lurking in the affair could be ascribed to Mr. Schorr. Accordingly, his name was referred for investigation to the Committee on Official Standards, and there is vague (though probably desultory) talk of canceling, at least for a time, his Congressional correspondent's privileges. CBS has in turn suspended its errant Washington correspondent from all reporting duties pending the outcome of the investigation, although it continues to pay his salary and reportedly plans to stand behind him at every step. Meanwhile, a considerable media furor rages over the ethics of Schorr's behavior, and the embattled reporter himself has let it be known that "the joys of martyrdom are considerably overrated."

The current pother over whether Schorr should or should not have sold confidential government documents to the *Village Voice* presents, to my mind, no difficult nor even interesting moral question. It is clear to all but the most foolish or naive that the national security interests of this country demand that some information remain confidential, particularly in connection with foreign intelligence-gathering operations. It is equally clear that there are established governmental institutions in our republic which have been entrusted with the responsibility to determine what information belongs in that category, and that their decisions in this area, right or wrong, are not subject to review by private citizens. Unless one accepts the rather fatuous contention that the press is some kind of *de facto* fourth branch of government, with custodial care over what the citizenry should be told, Mr. Schorr's recent activities must stand condemned as criminal and probably immoral. Having said this, however, I do not mean to suggest that the Schorr controversy is devoid of interest, for I think it is in fact a highly revelatory incident. In particular, I believe Mr. Schorr's choice of religious metaphor in describing his condition as "martyrdom" is not in the least accidental, but is rather a fairly accurate reflection of how our journalists—particularly those on television—perceive themselves.

The debate between those journalists who support and those who criticize Schorr's actions is a good illustration. The *New York Times*, for example, has editorialized against Schorr, accusing him of "selling secrets." Subsequent exchanges between the paper and the correspondent, however, have made it clear that the *Times* is concerned less with the "secrets" than the "selling." How, asked Schorr in defending himself, can you attack me when you sold the Pentagon Papers as a paperback? Didn't the *Times* make a profit on that? Ah, replied Editorial Page Editor John B. Oakes, that was completely different. Of course we make money from publishing the news; but in putting the Pentagon Papers out in book version, we were merely reprinting what had already appeared in our newspaper. On the other hand, what you have done, Mr. Schorr (quoth Oakes), is "to *traffic* in the news" (emphasis added). Thus, the *Times* sees no real problem in the fact that confidential information was revealed, and indeed could hardly criticize Schorr on this ground and still be consistent with its own past behavior. Presumably, had Schorr revealed the House report on CBS News, the *Times* would mark him blameless. The newspaper's criticism is rather that Schorr has somehow acted improperly *in terms of the moral standards of the profession itself.* He is no simple sinner who has revealed classified documents (and, indeed, he may not have sinned at all); he is instead a strayed priest, an individual who merits censure for transgressing the strictures of his Order.

The defense of Schorr proffered by the pompous little band at *The Nation* strikes a different note on the same scale. To *The Nation*, Congress' action against Schorr comes "dangerously close" to being a Constitutionally-prohibited "bill of attainder." Schorr himself is pictured as "a lonely figure against the array of the government's powers, [who] has challenged the whole system of government secrecy, taking on both Congress in its timidity and the executive branch in its arrogance." The idea of a timid Congress passing a bill of attainder is a nice image in itself, if a trifle inaccurate. (*The Nation* probably wants to say "bill of pains and penalties," since the punishment in a bill of attainder is death, and no one has proposed Mr. Schorr's execution.) The individual characterization of Schorr is by far the more picturesque image, however, conjuring up visions of a lonely John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, or a beleaguered Thomas More, preserving his integrity despite the threats and blandishments of a Henry VIII. This is no mere reporter, but some victimized prophet in a religious struggle. Clearly, *The Nation* is perfectly at ease with Schorr's self-portrait as a martyr.

The Schorr incident, of course, is but

one example of the media's apparent self-image as the high priests of our secular age. General network coverage of the CIA and Angola "stories" is, in my view, a considerably more striking illustration. In March, I described in this space ("Angola: Applying the 'Lessons' of Vietnam") how Walter Cronkite had introduced CBS coverage of the war in southern Africa with virtually a direct statement that the network considered Angola a Vietnam-in-the-making, and that CBS would do everything in its power to prevent our getting involved this time. Mr. John Roche, hardly as conservative as I, was also struck by the coverage presented by CBS and the other networks, and subsequently responded as follows in the pages of *TV Guide*: "I suddenly realized that the networks live in an ecclesiastical universe, that they have taken as their goal the quest for Salvation.... they do not see themselves as helpers, devoted to providing the populace with information upon which it can make informed judgments, but as spiritual directors, charged with leading their parishioners to the City of God."

The problems with having the news media—particularly the networks—as our "spiritual directors" are not difficult to point out. ABC, CBS, and NBC, for all their sober homilies about the oil companies and ITT, are without doubt the most powerful corporate oligopoly in America. There are but three of them; the stories they cover and the views they express are remarkably homogeneous; and (what is most frightening) they supply well over sixty percent of the populace with all or most of its news. They are neither chosen by nor responsible to any electorate, yet they can (and oft times do) wield more influence on a given issue than any group or individual with the possible exception of the President—and sometimes, more than he. And aside from all else, they are preaching, if you will, false doctrine. As Edith Efron noted, after forcing herself for a two-week period to get all of her news from the networks, the nation as reported on the evening news comes across as a repressive quasi-police state, permeated with corporate and governmental corruption, morally bankrupt, economically in ruins, and largely racist. It is hardly an accurate presentation, and quite likely a pernicious one.

I have few suggestions on how to deal with this problem. Doubtless, any governmental correctives would prove worse by far than what we must live with now. I suspect that in the end, one can hope for little more than greater awareness among the citizenry that the media is itself a powerful interest group, with an unattractive set of biases and predilections, whose pronunciamentos should be viewed at a minimum with a healthy measure of skepticism. As for self-correctives by journalists themselves, I fear that it is a pipedream to expect many of them. Peregrine Worsthorne, in writing of British unions in the February issue of *The Alternative*, remarked that "their strength springs from a profound sense of moral legitimacy, the like of which is no longer shared by any other institution." I do not know if Mr. Worsthorne's assessment is currently an accurate description of *this* nation's unions, but his language is certainly applicable to the secular prophets who dominate our airwaves. □

Book Review/Josiah Lee Auspitz

The Unconstitutionality of Fun

One is struck in rereading these cases —now in their second edition and thirteenth printing—at the great and unacknowledged debt which Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence owes to Mr. Albert Haddock. In case after case he has, by his ingenuity, eccentricity, and litigiousness, pioneered new rights for all of us, and clarified many important points of law.

In winning the famous *Board of Inland Revenue v. Haddock*, for example, Haddock, by his courageous act, established the principle that a citizen is entitled to pay his taxes by writing a check on the back of a cow, and that conducting this animal to the tax collector's office does not constitute a breach of the peace, a public nuisance, or any other such offense.

By his successful defense in one of the several cases with the title *Rex v. Haddock*, the defendant, whose colorful language regularly attracts a claque at a difficult hole on the golf course, escaped punishment under the Profane Oaths Act of 1745. Haddock showed that since golfing had not been invented in 1745, it could not be covered under this act, and even if it were, that cursing on the golf course is a form of temporary insanity.

And again, in the cross-filed action *Haddock v. The King*, *Haddock v. Constable Boot*, and *Haddock v. The Southern Railway*, Mr. Haddock (surely by now he should have been knighted as Sir Albert) won damages from the Crown—for harassment when he refused to show his passport to British authorities on his way to France. In upholding his view that a passport is addressed only to foreign authorities, the Lord Chancellor recommended that the Crown grant Mr. Haddock £5,000 (this in the 1920s) "in recognition of his public services" in protecting the rights of Englishmen against encroachment by the Foreign Office. The Lords Lick, Arrowroot, Sweet, and Sheep were unanimous in concurrence.

Uncommon Law: Being 66 Misleading Cases Revised and Collected in One Volume

by A.P. Herbert
Methuen (London) £2.50

In a later suit against the tax authorities, Haddock won the right for writers to deduct sunlamp treatments and vacations under the business allowance for wear-and-tear on machinery. In addition, the costs of his trips to Monte Carlo, and of such purchases as champagne and the hiring of a yacht, were all allowed as business expenses, since, as Haddock contended, how can an author "study and depict the gilded life of Society without constant visits to... places where Society is to be found?"

Even in defeat, Haddock has established landmark precedents. Especially illuminating is the case of *Rex v. Haddock* heard before the Court of Criminal Appeals by Justices Light, Addle, and Mudd. Haddock had jumped into the Thames to win a bet, and was able on appeal to refute all the specific charges against him: attempted suicide, endangering the lives of mariners, causing an obstruction, bookmaking, interfering with an authorized regatta, etc. Nevertheless, the court held him guilty, in a memorable opinion which has influenced a generation of American jurists: "...the appelant made the general answer that this was a free country and a man can do what he likes if he does nobody any harm.... A man capable of that remark would be capable of the grossest forms of licence and disorder. It cannot be too clearly understood that this is *not* a free country, and it will be an evil day for the legal profession when it is. The citizens of London must realize that there is almost nothing they are allowed to do.... And least of all may they do unusual actions 'for fun.' People must not do things for fun. We are not here for fun. There is no reference to fun in any Act of Parliament. If anything is said in this court to encourage a belief that Englishmen are entitled to jump off bridges for their own amusement the next thing to go will be the Constitution... It is not for me to say what of-

fence the appelant has committed, but I am satisfied that he has committed *some* offence...."

How, one wonders, could this poor writer afford all of his litigation? The damages awarded him, though often large, could not have sufficed, for he also lost a £10,000 case for defaming a patent medicine called Sinko. ("Sinko does not remove that sinking feeling, for I have tried it," he wrote.)

The careful reader will find the answer in Herbert's presentation of *In re Macalister*, in which Haddock contested the right of several other claimants to the one-million-pound estate left by Miss Mary Macalister to "The Liberal Party." This celebrated case of the 1920s, which involved Asquith, Lloyd George, and many other notable politicians, was finally resolved in Haddock's favor, on the grounds that the name Liberal as the testatrix understood it referred to the party of freedom and that Mr. Haddock was the only claimant to present a legislative program consonant with true liberty: namely, "a Bill for the Institution of the Death Penalty for Police Officers who Enter Respectable Clubs Disguised in Evening Dress.... and other beneficent measures whose purpose is neither to improve, uplift, enrich, nor reform the British subject, but to increase, by however little, his liberty and contentment."

Haddock may well have spent Miss Macalister's legacy entirely on the numerous appeals recorded in this volume. If so, it was money well spent. The same might be said for money expended on the price of this book, which has more than doubled in the past decade. In addition to the Haddock cases, there are many, many other classic opinions. Surely every law student is now aware of Sir Ethelrud Rutt's famous attack on the jury system in *British Phosphates and Beef Extract, Ltd. v. the United Alkali and Guano Simplex Association*: "Decent fellows, I dare say, some of you, but with no particular intelligence or financial training." Or of the definition of the reasonable man in *Fardell v. Potts* and the finding, in same, that "at Common Law a reasonable woman does not exist." Or of the finding against free speech in *Engheim, Muckovitch et al. v. The King*: "Every public speaker is a public peril no matter what his opinions."

This volume is one of those few things at which Britain still has a comparative advantage. And since no American publisher exists, the purchaser will be doing his bit for the Motherland in her time of need by ordering *Uncommon Law* from his bookseller. Moreover, the serious law student will find that A.P. Herbert's carefully-indexed collection will save him the trouble of spending countless hours in dusty archives looking up these cases in the yellowed issues of *Punch*, where they originally appeared more than a generation ago. □

The Talkies

by Robert Asahina

The Mindlessness of Lina Wertmüller

Seven Beauties, the latest film of Italian director/writer Lina Wertmüller, is now showing in Manhattan along with four of her previous movies (*Swept Away...*, *All Screwed Up*, *Love and Anarchy*, and *The Seduction of Mimi*). Even in New York, the simultaneous showing of five films by a single director is something of a feat in itself, but Wertmüller's work has also met with almost unanimous critical, as well as popular, approval. This is true most of all of *Seven Beauties*, which has been acclaimed as a masterpiece establishing Wertmüller in the company of such worshipped directors as her former mentor, Federico Fellini.

There is an obvious and vulgar explanation, of course, for the Wertmüller vogue: She is the only female director at work today who is both well-known and talented, even if she is by no means as talented as allegedly tough-minded critics are making her out to be. This explanation, however, does justice neither to Wertmüller nor to her partisans. Although time may eventually dampen some of their enthusiasm, and although critical distance may ultimately intervene to offer some perspective, her supporters are responding to her movies in ways that go beyond feminist ideology.

But what are they responding to? That is surprisingly difficult to determine, for the critical accolades to her films differ widely, and differ as well from Wertmüller's own assessment of her work. Some idea of the intellectual confusion that results from, and is found in, the experience of her movies was apparent last fall in the reaction to *Swept Away...*, which concerns the relationship between a blond, liberal, rich bitch (Mariangela Melato) and a swarthy, *macho*, socialist sailor (Giancarlo Giannini) on a Mediterranean cruise. During the first part of the movie, she abuses him as a lowly deckhand; but when they are stranded alone together on a deserted island, the tables are predictably turned. After a long period of being slapped into submission, she becomes his servile sexual slave, and they share an idyllic "romance." But they are eventually presented with an opportunity for rescue—which he insists that they take, against her wishes, in order to test their "love" in the real world. And, sure enough, their island romance does not survive the test, and there is a fashionably downbeat ending.

The most surprising thing about the success of *Swept Away...* is that audiences and critics could be so enthusiastic about a movie with such a hackneyed and formula-ridden plot. That men should enjoy what years ago would have been called a "women's picture," if it had been made in Hollywood, can be partially accounted for by its graphic presentation of male sexual dominance. But that women should enjoy such a "romance"—and they do—is puzzling, unless those old canards about innate female masochism and sexual submissiveness somehow apply to many more women than anyone has recently imagined.

Perhaps everybody was merely swept away by the breathtaking photography of the blue Mediterranean and of the bronzed bodies cavorting in the surf and on the sand. Perhaps too, audiences were enthralled by the romance between the movie's cardboard characters; after all, beneath the most cynical hide often beats a heart of mush. But I suspect that the popularity of *Swept Away...* derives mainly from its powerful element of another kind of romance—the romance of ideas. This is no mere island romance, as in the old Hollywood days, but a foreign film, with characters who actually talk about politics, who seemingly embody the contradictions of class and sex!

What difference does it make that the ideas are mere clichés? The gilding on that old Hollywood trash is the glitter of

trendy ideas, and the fact that those ideas are muddled only contributes to the glamour—imagine all the interpretations, all the discussions, all the controversy. Does *Swept Away...* mean to say that the triumph of socialism is not possible in the real world? That liberal capitalists are sexy and weak? That natural man beats his mate? That socialists are sexists? That socialists are sexy? Wertmüller herself, an avowed socialist and feminist, offered the most bizarre interpretation. She claimed that feminists who criticized her were mistaken, because (as she said in an interview with Molly Haskell) "the Mariangela Melato character was really a man! ...She's a symbol of bourgeois enlightenment... she represents bourgeois society, therefore she represents the man!" (!)

In *Seven Beauties*, too, Wertmüller's stunning cinematography and the illusion of intellectuality add glitter to what is basically a trash of mindless conceptions. The film tells the story of a Neapolitan, Pasqualino Seven Beauties—so called because of his seven sisters—at the time of the Second World War. When the oldest of his sisters becomes a whore, Pasqualino (played by Giancarlo Giannini again) murders and dismembers her pimp, to preserve the family honor. After pleading guilty to the crime by reason of insanity, he is committed to an asylum, where he rapes a madwoman strapped to a bed, undergoes shock therapy, and effects his release by volunteering for the Italian army. He quickly deserts, but is as quickly captured by the Germans. To survive the horrors of the concentration camp, he decides to collaborate, by making love to the female camp commandant (played by 250-pound Shirley Stoler), choosing six of his fellow prisoners to be exterminated, and personally executing a close companion. But he manages to survive, and returns to Naples at the end of the war, only to find that all of his sisters have become whores, as well as the one girl who had promised to wait for him. As the movie ends, we get the philosophy he has learned through all his hardships: "Don't think about the past. What's done is done. You're alive."

The film, of course, is about Life and Death—but what about them? Is it that survival justifies anything? That Pasqualino is Everyman who survives only by a moral anarchy that matches the situations he is trapped in? That Life is miserable and degrading? That nihilism is good? That nihilism is bad? It is as difficult to understand the concerns of the movie as it is ultimately irrelevant. For although we are presented with a variety of genuine moral dilemmas—the weighing of personal survival against the betrayal of one's comrades, for instance—the scenes in which such dilemmas are posed are empty of moral and cognitive content, leaving only the shock value of the dazzling cinematic virtuosity. The movie doesn't *mean* anything—it merely *is*, and we experience it in a morally neutral, and ultimately mindless, fashion.

In *Seven Beauties*, as in *Swept Away...*, Wertmüller has presented a series of impressively staged scenes—in this case, scenes not of chic love, but of a nihilistic comic-strip parade of grotesque characters in grotesque situations. The only operative criterion for both the generation and the assessment of such scenes is the intensity of the shocks—and the more shocking, the better. *Seven Beauties* is a horror film in which moral dilemmas are used only as the pretext for shocking scenes milked for their entertainment value.

(*continued on page 39*)

The Bootblack Stand

by George Washington Plunkitt

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

Golly, I think all this criticism of the CIA can only hurt the best interests of the United States, and gosh wouldn't it be awful if the Russians unleashed nuclear holocaust right in the middle of our Bicentennial? Mummy and Daddy worry too. America must be kept strong and free if it is going to remain the hope of the world and a place where people can still have a very nice time.

For the last two years I have been victimized by pinkos and dope freaks. They dragged me around the country and treated me awful. What awful people! Some of those girls would go for days without a change of linen, and their language... boy, my ears still burn. They laughed at me when I said bedtime prayers and would not even allow me to renew my membership in the Young Americans for Freedom. The food was full of preservatives, and they forced me to listen while they read hideous passages from *Jaws*.

How can I get free? All I want to do is get out and attend a Camp Fire Girls meeting. It has been years.

—Love it or leave it,
Patricia Hearst

Dear Patricia:

I still see no reason why you did not plead insanity. All those months at Berkeley with associates like that jackass Weed are irrefutable evidence. Incidentally, thanks for sending me that literature about Honor America Day. It sounds like an excellent idea.

—GWP

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

I had my first homosexual experience after attending a movie all about Chile with other concerned citizens. It was a beautiful experience, but as I drove home I discovered that my Persian cat, Rebel, had either transformed herself into pavement sealer in front of our house or had been run over by an unusually behemoth steam roller. I took this as an omen, and after attending a movie about the big pharmaceutical companies' campaign against herbal medicines I decided to become a public servant. It was a very deep moment for me. So now I am intent on running for Congress. I want to be the candidate of simple, concerned, decent, educated, oppressed people. What kind of advice can you give me?

—Sincerely,
Just Chuck
Oswego, New York

Dear Chuck:

I can give you the best advice. Do not run for Congress! You are far too mature to fall in with such goof-offs as are numbered in the legislative branch of this staggering republic. Admittedly, you are no genius. Truth to tell, your letter reveals you as a bit of a jerk, but you are vastly more sound than, say, Congressman Michael Harrington or Senator Lowell Weicker, he of the lugubrious visage. Stay away from such disreputables and attend to your good causes.

—GWP

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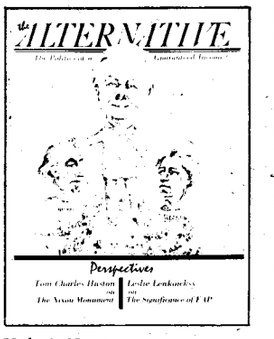

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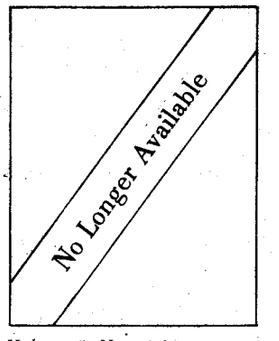

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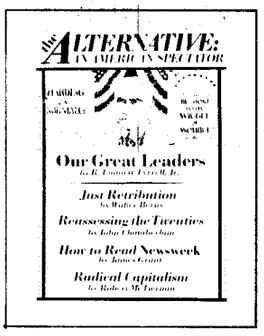

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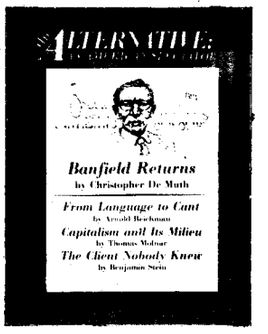

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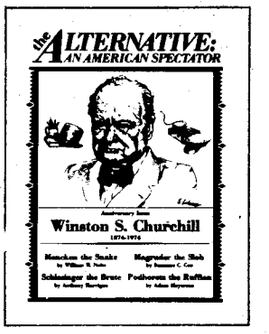

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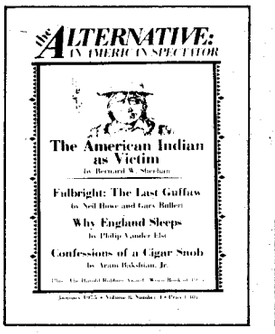

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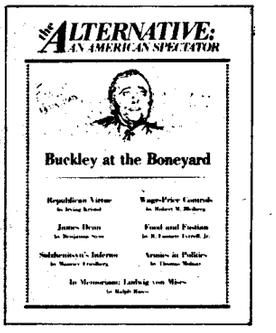

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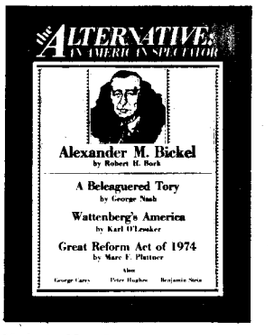

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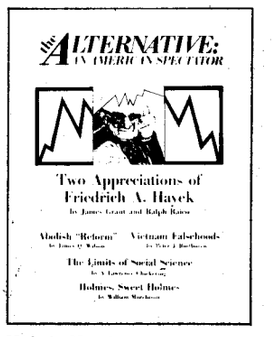

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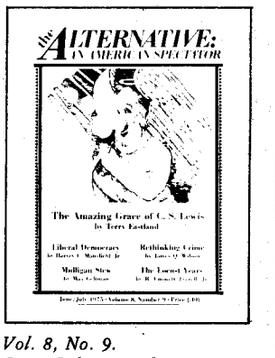

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"Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." —Euripides

Current Wisdom

THE WELFARE STATE: The realization of Eleanor Roosevelt's hopes and dreams, as reported by the redoubtable Associated Press:

Some players with the Milwaukee Brewers, though baseball's minimum annual salary is $16,000, have been drawing unemployment compensation in the offseason, their employer has acknowledged.

Allan (Bud) Selig, president of the American League club, said players in other cities also draw jobless benefits during winter vacation.

Selig declined to name players who are picking up unemployment checks. Club comptroller Richard Hoffman said they number fewer than 50 per cent of the roster.

Martin Kestin, State Unemployment Compensation director, said players could be receiving $117 a week for up to 34 weeks.

—Associated Press
March 11, 1976

BELOVED INFIDEL: An *aperçu* into the fine mind of the late and controversial Mr. Donald David DeFreeze, oft-paroled founder of the Symbionese Liberation Army (12 arrests in 10 years), as provided by the very same in a 1970 letter to one Judge William Ritzie:

"I am going to talk to you truthfully and like I am talking to God. I will tell you things that no one has ever before know.

"To Start a story of a mans life you can start at the end, but at the start, this start will begin at the age of Sixteen.

"At that age, I had Just gotten out of a boys school in New York after doing 2½ years for braking into a Parking Meter and for stealing a car. I remember the Judge said that he was sending me to Jail for boys because he said it was the best place for me. I was sixteen at the time and didn't have a home, life in the little prison as we called it, was nothing but fear and hate, day in and day out, the hate was madening, the only safe place was your cell... I had only two frights, if you can call them frights, I never did win. It was funny but the frights were over the fact that I would not be part of any of the gangs, black or white. I wanted to be friends with everyone, this the other inmates would not allow, they would try to make me fright, but I always got around them somehow, they even tried to make a homosexual out of me. I got around this to. After 2½ years I found myself hated by many of the boys there.

"When I got out of jail, people just could not believe I had ever been in Jail. I worked hard, I didn't drink or any pills nor did I curse....

"We were married and things were lovely... Then seven months later I came home sooner than I do most of the time from work and she and a old boy friend had just had relations. I was very mad and very hurt....

"I thought that if we had kids or a baby we would be closer, but as soon as the baby was born it was the same thing I had began to drink very deeply, but I was trying to put up with her and hope that she would change.

"But as the years went by she never did and she told me that she had been to see her boy friend and that she wanted a divorce because I was not taking care of her and the kids good enough, I was never so mad in my life... I could have killed her but I didn't. I through her out of the house and I got a saw and hammer and completely destroyed everything I ever bought her and I mean everything!

"For months later she begged me to take her back and she said she had made a mistake and that she really loved me. I was weak again... I took her back... But I couldn't face anyone any more. I started drinking more and more and staying at my job late... I started playing with guns and firer works and dogs and cars. Just anything to get away from life....

"I told my wife I would forget all that she had did to me... But I was wrong again. I started playing with guns, drinking, pills but this time more than I had ever before did. I was arrested again and again for guns or bombs. I don't really understand what I was doing....

"You sent me to Chino and I lied to them and didn't tell them all the truth. They think I am nuts... But you should not have sent me back to her. The day after I got home she told me she had had Six relations with some man she meant on the street when I was in Chino...

"Sir Don't send me to prison again, I am not a crook or a thief nor am I crazy. I hope you will believe me... Sir, even if you don't ever call me back or want to see me again Thank you for all you have done and all I can say is God Bless you,

"Yours Truly, Donald DeFreeze"

—*New York Post*
March 3, 1976

CULTURAL NOTES: Proof that cultural advances are running apace with economic advances under the wizardry of Britain's Labour regime:

Sgt. Jim Collins amuses his friends at an air force base at Middle Wallop, England, with tunes played by hitting himself on the head with a wrench. Collins, whose repertoire includes "Deutschland Uber Alles," "Rule Britannia," and "Onward Christian Soldiers," says that each blow on his head with the nine-inch wrench produces an easily recognizable note. "I discovered my musical head when I banged it against another man's head in a rugby scrum. People who hear me think I want my head examined—but I don't even get a headache after a musical session."

—*International Herald Tribune*
March 16, 1976

THE LEGENDARY NIXON: While repining over a recently retired politician's testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the revered Mr. Anthony Lewis disinters still more Nixonian crimes, crimes that the scoundrel had hitherto managed to pin on the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia's equivalent to the League of Women Voters:

The part where it became less easy to smile was when Nixon spoke enthusiastically about his and Henry Kissinger's policy of bombing Cambodia in secret. It "saved American lives," he said. Is it possible that anyone can still defend policies that destroyed Cambodia's society, killed a tenth of its people and led to its present tyranny?

—*New York Times*
March 15, 1976

GROWING OLD ABSURD: A highbrow Catholic in action:

The urban "crisis" is now sufficiently long-standing that it must be regarded as an American institution; so cherished that no national commitment has ever been made to cope with it with any of the dedication applied to sending a man to the moon or waging war in Vietnam.

—*Commonweal*
March 12, 1976

UNDER WESTERN EYES: *The Nation*, keeping its public-spirited readers *au courant* on the latest atrocities committed by the most flagitious Machiavellian to reign at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue since Richard M. Nixon, he of unbeloved memory:

The price this country pays for having Gerald R. Ford as President is rising rapidly as the campaign warms up. Mr Ford, seeking the votes of no more than 22,000 Cuban refugees who are registered as Republicans in Florida, gave a vicious twist to American policy toward Cuba in a recent Miami campaign speech. He branded Fidel Castro an "international outlaw" and called his government "a regime of aggression" for sending troops to Angola. (Remember Vietnam?) "I solemnly warn Fidel Castro against any temptation to armed intervention in the Western Hemisphere," blustered the President of us all, threatening "appropriate measures" if that should happen.

—*The Nation*
March 13, 1976

Book Review/Judy Mathews

The Spy Who Came in from Camp Blakey

Saving the Queen is a spy novel involving young Blackford Oakes who, like the author, William F. Buckley, Jr., is educated briefly in England, graduates from Yale, and becomes a CIA deep-cover agent in London. His mission is to discover who near Queen Caroline of England is leaking hydrogen bomb secrets to the Soviets.

Blackford Oakes' subtle humor is Buckley at his most puckish, as when, at a White House dinner, he tells the wife of the president of General Motors (whom he calls Mrs. Motors) that President Truman has designed Operation Down Under, " 'the mechanism that sinks the whole of central Washington underground, under an atomic-proof carapace.... In fact... the button is over there right behind the President.' ... As they got up, Blackford saw Mrs. Wilson dive for her husband and point toward the curtain behind the dais. Her husband listened, spoke a single word, looked in disgust over at Black, shook his head, and escorted his wife to safety."

The hero looks like Buckley and even quotes Latin phrases with the same gusto and fluency, and it is, therefore, impossible ever to forget the author's presence. Upon receiving word from his mother that his parents have separated, 15-year-old Blackford Oakes hitchhikes from camp to his aunt's house in New York.

"[Blackford] arrived in the late afternoon, the beneficiary of random highway philanthropies including a plate of french-fried potatoes from the Howard Johnson waitress who, when he had sat down after his driver dropped him to go north to Hartford, and asked, at the counter, for a glass of water, said he was cute, which, suddenly, he realized self-consciously, he probably was, wearing trim white shorts, and a T-shirt marked CAMP BLAKEY, and white socks and tennis shoes, a rope belt and a watch with an Indian head band he had sewn himself. At 5'7" and 120 pounds he was growing fast, but not in those mutant leaps and bounds that leave the mid-adolescent looking like a gazelle. His hair was a dark blond, with the same yellow-white strains that even now came out on the least touch of the sun. Though his lips were normally set, he was quick to smile, a charming and precocious smile, somehow wise and amused, and he smiled when the waitress, varying very little from the basic gambit of the truck driver, said there were excess potatoes, that a dumb cook had prepared too many. But after eating only a few, suddenly his stomach was narcotized by his mind's return to the letter, and he walked quickly to the men's room and wept silently in the toilet compartment, wedging his weight against the door because there was no lock. When he regained control, he left through the back way, and resumed hitchhiking, out of sight of the waitress, whose generous impulse he could not trust himself to acknowledge without betraying himself, or embarrassing her."

Obviously the author does not stand very far removed from his novel. Blackford Oakes *is* William Buckley not only in appearance and sense of humor, but even in manners and concern for others—qualities not usually found in our public figures, yet qualities for which Buckley is renowned.

Because Buckley is so inextricable from his novel, the sex scenes, particularly the one at Mme. Pensaud's house of prostitution, are embarrassing. It is not that they are terribly kinky or that they are contrived. What makes the reader uncomfortable is that it is Buckley who is saying them. One cannot disassociate him from his work. Apparently aware of this condition—a condition that would flaw another book—the author turns it to delightful advantage as when his narrative impishly mentions *God and Man at Yale*, and his friend, James Burnham. Buckley is having fun and so will most readers, even though the fun is never had at the expense of the serious issues which hover about the narrative. Only a grouser will complain and only Garry Wills and the *New York Review of Books* will prowl the text for evidence of worldwide conspiracy.

Saving the Queen

by William F. Buckley, Jr.
Doubleday $7.95

The two most impressive scenes in the book have, however, little to do with sex. The first is the episode at Greyburn, the British public school Oakes attends for a few months. In these scenes Oakes represents the irrepressible American spirit, intelligent and witty, and yet undaunted by British authority. As punishment for drawing an obscene caricature of his Latin master on the blackboard (and for simple American insolence), Oakes receives nine lashes. The description of the torture is vivid and painful. When it is over, the headmaster and wielder of the whip says as proof of his anti-Americanism, "Courtesy of Great Britain, sir." Oakes remembers Dr. Chase's words and vows to get even someday. His eventual success is memorable.

The other great scene is the final one in which Blackford has discovered who the British traitor is. He must then either convince him to commit suicide, or he must kill both the traitor and himself in what appears to be an accidental plane crash. The discussion between the two men occurs in the air over the radios of their two competing fighter planes which they are demonstrating before an audience which includes the Queen. It is suspenseful and dramatic. I shall not spoil the novel by revealing its outcome. The reader deserves to have as much fun with it as did the author. □

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To the Editor:

If ever anybody wanted to cure this country of "Cronkitis," it has been me; and I would love to think that we could have reason without Reasoner.

The only thing that irritates me is that couldn't you pick on something besides the movies? I know the old ones are keeping television alive, and most of the old ones are mine; but I certainly don't feel responsible for Cronkite. Maybe you could talk your future subscribers into staying away from one Rock Show or limit them to one Pet Rock, or even suggest that they miss one philharmonic performance rather than the Keystone Cops and me.

John Wayne
Beverly Hills, California

To the Editor:

I know exactly how disgruntled correspondents Cooke and Hoggatt (March) feel. But these fortunate folk need only cancel their subscriptions to **The Alternative** in order to avoid ideas which upset their sensibilities.

I, on the other hand, would have to cancel: my two daily newspapers, a gift subscription to **Time** from my witless brother-in-law, ten public service announcements, eight situation comedies, seven detective shows, five out of six new movies, four radio programs, three network news shows, two educational TV entertainments, both Houses of Congress, and a partridge in a pear tree.

Ilona Easton
Bethel, Connecticut

To the Editor:

I looked upon the addition of your feature "Among the Intellectualoids" with great delight when it first appeared. Unfortunately, I thought it was supposed to be written about them, not by them.

J. Whitney Stillman's rather dated book review of Robert Heinlein's **Stranger in a Strange Land** was perhaps the most inane piece of quasi-mysticism this side of **National Review**. I say mysticism because I am mystified as to the purpose of his verbiage. As someone who is a limited-state libertarian and used to be a life-long conservative, I am fascinated by Stillman's discovery that Heinlein (a) likes sex, (b) dislikes organized religion, and (c) has no hang-ups about nudity. Wow, Stillman's powers of observation overwhelm me! Such perception should rank him somewhere between Galileo and Copernicus, a couple of dudes who had their own problems with the theocrats, bureaucrats, and statists Heinlein has so thoroughly renovated in a number of novels and short stories.

It is only fair to point out that while **Stranger in a Strange Land** is one of Heinlein's best sellers, it is perhaps more difficult for those with cultural prejudices and problems to understand. For anyone interested in following this up, I would suggest: **Starship Troopers**, expressing patriotism in libertarian terms; **Revolt in 2100**, the overthrow of an American theocracy; **The Puppet Masters**, a classic dissertation on internal subversion; **The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress**, containing at least as much hard-core libertarian thought as **Atlas Shrugged** with a lot less pages; and finally **Time Enough for Love**, Heinlein's **Ein Heldenleben**. But a warning to the Stillmans of the world. In most of these novels, people take off their clothes and have sex and even enjoy it. I mean, they even do it with each other. Which is, of course, thoroughly untraditional.

Perhaps as a follow-up, **The Alternative** could secure someone who is not a conservative but a life-long liberal who became a libertarian to review **God and Man at Yale** and explain that William F. Buckley, Jr. is, in fact, a Catholic.

Emil Franzi
Tucson, Arizona

Mr. Stillman replies:

My low opinion of Robert Heinlein's **Stranger in a Strange Land** is not based on political or religious grounds. And it is not the result of finding the novel too difficult to "understand." I do not know how anyone could find this novel—so reeking with obviousness—difficult to understand. Once the protagonist, Valentine Michael Smith, learns how to speak English, the novel does not contain an idea, a description, or a piece of dialogue of any complexity or subtlety whatever. It is, in fact, comically juvenile; all the characters talk as if they were eleventh-graders at an American high school during the fifties; the thoughts expressed by the author's various mouthpieces are hackneyed beyond belief; his lampooning of kooky evangelists (who should be considered beyond satire) is tiresome and heavy-handed; the sex scenes—far from being shocking—are strictly for minors; and all this is capped off with sickening cuteness and sentimentality. These qualities are not unusual in a popular novel. What makes Heinlein unique (forgetting about Ayn for the moment) is that he infuses his product with raging egotism. His youthfully-minded readers are made to feel that they are superior to the masses. They get to watch as "theocrats, bureaucrats, and statists" are "thoroughly renovated" or, more typically, dumped in manure. Mr. Franzi seems a prime example of this moronic master-class. What I regret is that in my essay I did not differentiate between superior individuals like him and those libertarians whose politics is not a function of their worship for third-rate novelists.

To the Editor:

I very much enjoyed Peregrine Worsthorne's article on British trade unions in your February issue, first, on account of its lucidity, and second, for its courage to show that labor unions are a power elite like other power elites, past, present, and future. I disagree only with his explanation. Worsthorne argues that union arrogance stems partly from the previous social inequality in Great Britain, the style and image of which have persisted and rendered middle-class resistance to union despotism timid, sporadic, unpopular. This, I suggest, is a rather superficial view. The author himself finds a parallel between present-day union power and medieval Church power—and it is a pity he did not pursue this historically enlightening line of argumentation. Politically speaking, why in the Middle Ages were Church, feudal lords, private armies, and free cities so recalcitrant and turbulent? Because State power was weak, the notion of common good existed only in the jurists' books, and factions all vied with each other for supreme—State—power. This was the essence of feudalism, and still is, although we dare not call the present situation "neo-feudal."

The faction under the banner of "social justice" happens to be stronger than other factions and institutions which also had their day: business and defense, for example. The weak State, as Burckhardt saw it a century ago, always whores after the strongest faction, copying its program—and today the strongest factions are the labor unions, the leftist parties and pressure groups, and the media. The institutions advocating the common good and civil peace are downgraded, ignored, and sacrificed. It may be that only a strong State, not subservient to, and not in symbiosis with, any faction, can restore the balance that emerged at the end of the Middle Ages.

Yet the entire public policy is against such a restoration because it would have to be effected on the Aristotelian line that inequality is inevitable and must be accepted. Centuries of democracy have made such a prospect unrealistic. But let us observe that while we complain about the Syndical-State, others, elsewhere, are in a similar quandary: the weakness of the State in modern times has produced such hybrids as the Army-State, the Party-State, the Bureaucratic-State. Are these not equivalent phenomena?

Thomas Molnar
New York, New York

To the Editor:

I find it shocking that such a journal as yours could be published in our enlightened and compassionate nation. It is an outrage to all Americans who believe in George Meany, national health care legislation, the importance of Havana ice cream cones to world peace, and the American way. I must also warn you that after extensive experiments, it has been demonstrated that your magazine causes cancer in rats. I, therefore, have alerted the proper federal authorities and anticipate the EPA demanding complete editorial compliance by 1978. I understand Sen Bayh envisions hearings.

Joseph McNulty
Greensboro, North Carolina

TALKIES
(continued from page 34)

It is only when we reflect upon individual scenes that we understand how little the clarity of the ideas matters next to the impact of the cinematography. In one scene, the prisoner who had been the spokesman for humanism (Fernando Rey) commits suicide, after witnessing Pasqualino's betrayal of his fellow prisoners, by diving into a trough of human excrement, where he is promptly machine-gunned by the camp guards. The scene was simultaneously gripping, disgusting, and (at least to some of the audience when I saw it) funny. Yet it was also typically confused—and ultimately empty. Who would choose to die in such a grotesque fashion, even given the extremities of the concentration camp? Why a trough of excrement? Why a humanist?

Of course, there is no end to the questions that could be raised about such scenes, and perhaps this helps to explain the peculiar congruence of professional and popular opinion about *Seven Beauties*, indeed about all of Wertmüller's films. Movie reviewers like to cloak their own visceral responses in respectable intellectual frameworks—and Wertmüller has obligingly provided both the shocks and the signals by which to interpret them in stunning and impressive quantity. No matter that the signals are often garbled: the very profusion of ideas seduces intellectuals into thinking that she is profound, and the variety of interpretations thus made possible is the critic's lifeblood. By the same token, the increasingly large number of shallow but "well-informed" moviegoers—who respond viscerally to films but lack the intellectual equipment to articulate their appreciation—seize upon films over which they can argue endlessly, fueled with the latest opinions of their favorite reviewers.

In *Swept Away...* Wertmüller indulged the romantic fantasies of disaffected intellectual nihilists by camouflaging a banal love story—which otherwise would have been scorned for what it is—with beautiful images and trendy ideas. In *Seven Beauties* she has indulged that nihilism straightforwardly by providing a moral freak show where the shocks are the sole entertainment, presented in gripping scenes with ideas as mere window-dressing. Wertmüller is a talented filmmaker, but her real genius lies in her shrewd ability to both seduce and shock, to feed the nihilism of her audiences.

It would be comforting to think that the Wertmüller vogue is confined to upper Manhattan. Yet as suggested by the proliferation of massage parlors and fiscal crises throughout the rest of America, the Manhattanization of the United States has proceeded steadily. The facile seductiveness of films is contagious; *Seven Beauties* will play in Peoria, and will probably play to packed houses. □

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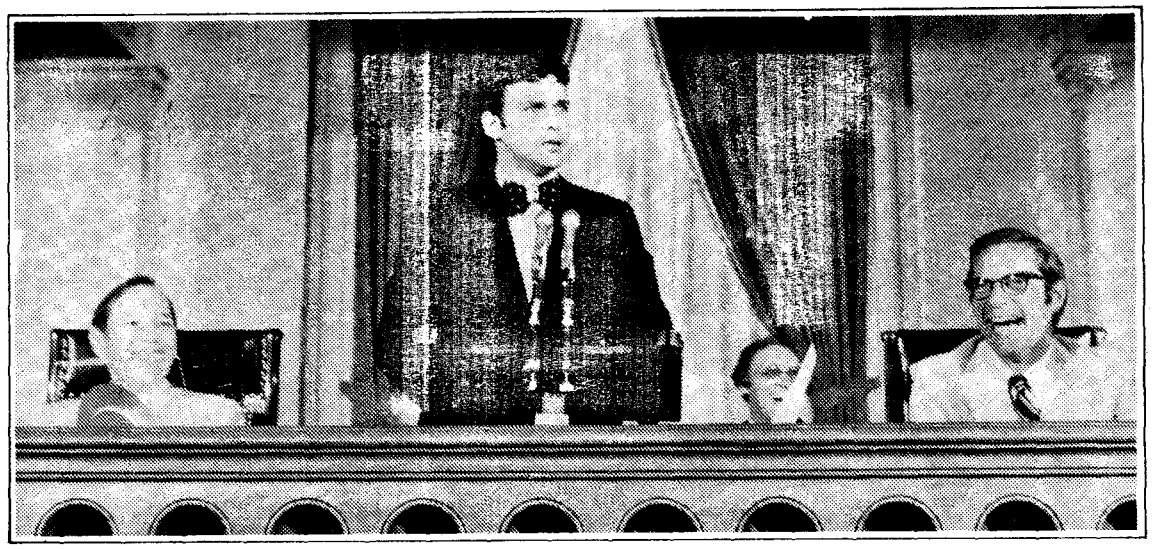

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., editor of *The Alternative*, delivering remarks after receiving an award from the American Institute for Public Service, in the Old Supreme Court Chamber on July 23. (Left to right, Sen. Robert A. Taft, Tyrrell, Rep. John H. Buchanan, Hon. William E. Simon.)

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